

**Features**

**3 Parental Illness and Adolescent Development**

*By Nancy L. Worsham, Ph.D., and Emily K. Crawford, B.A.*

The prevalence of parental illness and its impact on adolescent development is reviewed in this article. The existing literature on cancer, AIDS, and other illnesses (e.g., multiple sclerosis) are explored and implications for concerned professionals are provided.

**7 Adolescents Coping with Non-Terminal Parental Cancer**

*By Maureen Davey, Ph.D., and Adam Davey, Ph.D.*

This article presents the results of a retrospective multiple-case pilot study with six families designed to uncover how parents and their adolescent children (ages 11–18) were affected by non-terminal parental cancer, and how they adjusted to and coped with cancer.

**10 Adolescent Reactions to Parental Cancer: Strategies for Providing Support**

*By Victoria Rizzo, Ph.D., and Kristen Kirkland, M.S.W.*

This article provides an overview of the behaviors and reactions exhibited by adolescents when a parent has life threatening cancer. Current interventions to help adolescents whose parents are seriously ill are highlighted.

**13 HIV-Affected Adolescents: Vulnerabilities and Promising Interventions**

*By Dorie Gilbert, Ph.D.*

As increasing numbers of parents are diagnosed with HIV, their adolescent children face challenging developmental milestones while simultaneously navigating the psychological impact associated with a parent's chronic illness from HIV. This article reviews the literature on challenges faced by HIV-affected youth as well as their protective factors and a range of promising interventions.

**17 Traumatic Stress in Adolescents Anticipating Parental Death**

*By Amy Saldinger, Ph.D., Albert C. Cain, Ph.D., and Katherine Porterfield, Ph.D.*

Reporting on a qualitative study with 35 surviving spouses and their parentally-bereaved school-aged children, this article explores the traumatic stress of a child's exposure to the graphic physical, emotional, and mental deterioration of a dying parent.



**Departments**

**2 From the Editor's PC**

**16 Web Resources**

*The Prevention Researcher* is a quarterly journal with the mission of connecting service professionals to the latest research. Established in 1994, each single-theme issue of *The Prevention Researcher* focuses on an "at-risk" youth topic from a prevention standpoint. *The Prevention Researcher* is indexed in ERIC, CINAHL, and PsycEXTRA.

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## From the Editor's PC

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our November issue of *The Prevention Researcher*. For this issue, we are focusing on an area that gets little attention but impacts many of us—coping with seriously, chronically, or terminally ill parents. We think our authors have done a very fine job at examining how youth are affected when their parents are seriously ill, and how we can help them cope.

Beginning our exploration of this important topic is an article by Dr. Nancy Worsham from Gonzaga University and her colleague Emily Crawford who provide a look at the prevalence of parental illness and its impact on adolescent development.

Most cases of parental illness are not terminal. Dr. Maureen Davey, Children's Outpatient Director at PATH, and co-author Dr. Adam

Davey, explore the effects of non-terminal parental cancer on adolescents through the use of family interviews. Staying on the topic of cancer, Dr. Victoria Rizzo and Kristen Kirkland from the University at Albany, review the literature on adolescent reactions to parental cancer and provide strategies for helping adolescents cope.

Unlike their peers who are coping with parental cancer, youth whose parents have HIV/AIDS must deal with the stigma of AIDS. They are also more likely to be living in single parent families. Dr. Dorie Gilbert from the University of Texas at Austin, explores the unique developmental challenges of HIV-affected adolescents.

Unfortunately, some parents do die from their illnesses. Concluding this issue is an

article by Dr. Amy Saldinger from the University of Michigan and her colleagues who explore the traumatic stress adolescents experience when anticipating parental death.

Having a parent with a terminal, serious, or chronic illness can be a challenge for adolescents. It is our hope that this issue of *The Prevention Researcher* will provide those who work with youth an insight into this topic and important tools for helping these youth cope.

All the best,



Steven Ungerleider, Ph.D.  
Psychologist/Editor

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**The Prevention Researcher**

Integrated Research Services  
66 Club Road, Suite 370  
Eugene, Oregon 97401

**Phone:** 800-929-2955

or 541-683-9278

**FAX:** 541-683-2621

**Web:** www.TPRonline.org

**E-Mail:** info@TPRonline.org

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