THE EFFECT OF PICTURE DRAWING AND WRITING ON THE ANXIETY LEVELS OF CHILDREN WITH CANCER

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INTRODUCTION
Long-term hospitalization could be a stressful experience for children with cancer. Some children with cancer may find it hard to verbally express their feelings such as anxiety1 . Psychosocial state of children with cancer be evaluated by using drawing ² . Through their drawings, children express thoughts and feelings ³ .

OBJECTIVE
The study was conducted to determine the effect of drawing a picture and telling a shared story on the anxiety levels of children with cancer.

MATERIAL AND METHOD
This semi-interventional study was conducted at the hematology-oncology unit of a university hospital in the Ankara, Turkey. Sample of the research was conducted with hospitalized children, from 15 March-15 April 2014, aged 9-16 (n=15). Children who were not experienced any significant life-time event besides the disease since the last six months, who were received two or more chemotherapy cycles and whose treatment are continuing, who were not at a terminal period and who had no symptoms (pain, vomiting etc.) during the study period were included in the research. Data was collected with a descriptive data form and “State Anxiety Inventory”. The higher the score is in inventory, the higher the score of anxiety is. Written consent was received from the institution and parents. In the research, a 5-day therapeutic program was used on the children. Program was included drawing pictures and telling a shared story from the pictures drawn (Figure 1). The anxiety levels of the children were evaluated before and after the program. In the assessment of data, descriptive analyses (percentage, frequency) and Wilcoxon test were used.

RESULTS
The average age of the children was 12.46±2.74, mean diagnosis age was 11.06±3.08, mean period of treatment was 1.33±2.15 years, mean hospitalization time was 31.13±43.15 days. 80% of the children were male, all of them have had a nuclear family, 73.3% off from their school, 26.7% left school. Most of them were diagnosed with leukemia and were receiving a chemotherapy treatment. 86.7% of the children were cared by their mothers.

The average pre-test and post-test state anxiety scores of the children were determined respectively as 40.46±4.51 and 36.86±4.12. It was not found any difference between pre and post-test scores (Z=3.01; p=0.001) (Table 1).

Table 1. The State Anxiety Inventory Scores of Pretest and Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M±SD</th>
<th>Min.-Max.</th>
<th>Wilcoxon Test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>40.46±4.5</td>
<td>33-49</td>
<td>Z=3.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>36.86±4.12</td>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>P=0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION
According to study, therapeutic program was found effective to decrease children’s state anxiety scores. It is recommended that therapeutic program should be developed and applied on children with chronic diseases.

REFERENCES