



Feasibility and Preliminary Outcomes of a Psychoeducation Intervention for Caregivers of Children with Cancer Receiving Treatment: A Pilot Study



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BACKGROUND

- Negative psychological symptoms and poor health-related quality of life have been reported among the caregivers of children with cancer. 1,2
- Psychoeducation interventions have been used to manage anxiety, depressive symptoms, and poor health-related quality of life among caregivers of children with cancer on treatment and have shown positive effects. 3
- However, evidence of its effectiveness among Malawian caregivers is not well-documented.



STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To assess the feasibility and acceptability of the psychoeducation intervention among the caregivers of children with cancer receiving treatment
- To evaluate its preliminary effectiveness on anxiety, depressive symptoms, coping, and health-related coping of life

METHODS

Study Design

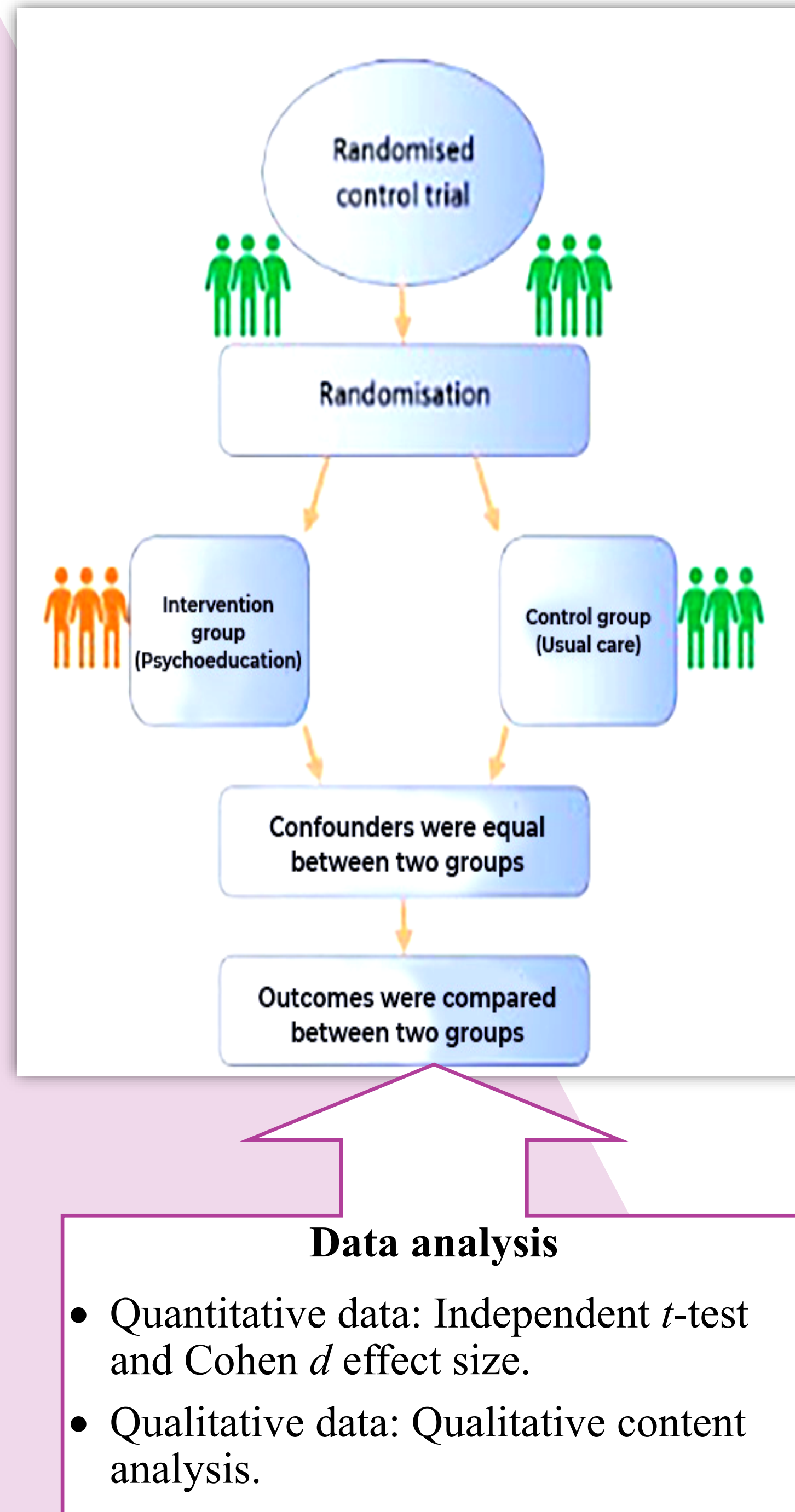
- Single-blind parallel randomised controlled trial at two paediatric cancer centres in Malawi.
- Block randomization, assessor blinding, and sequentially numbered opaque envelopes were used.

Sample size

- 24 participants with 12 participants each group.

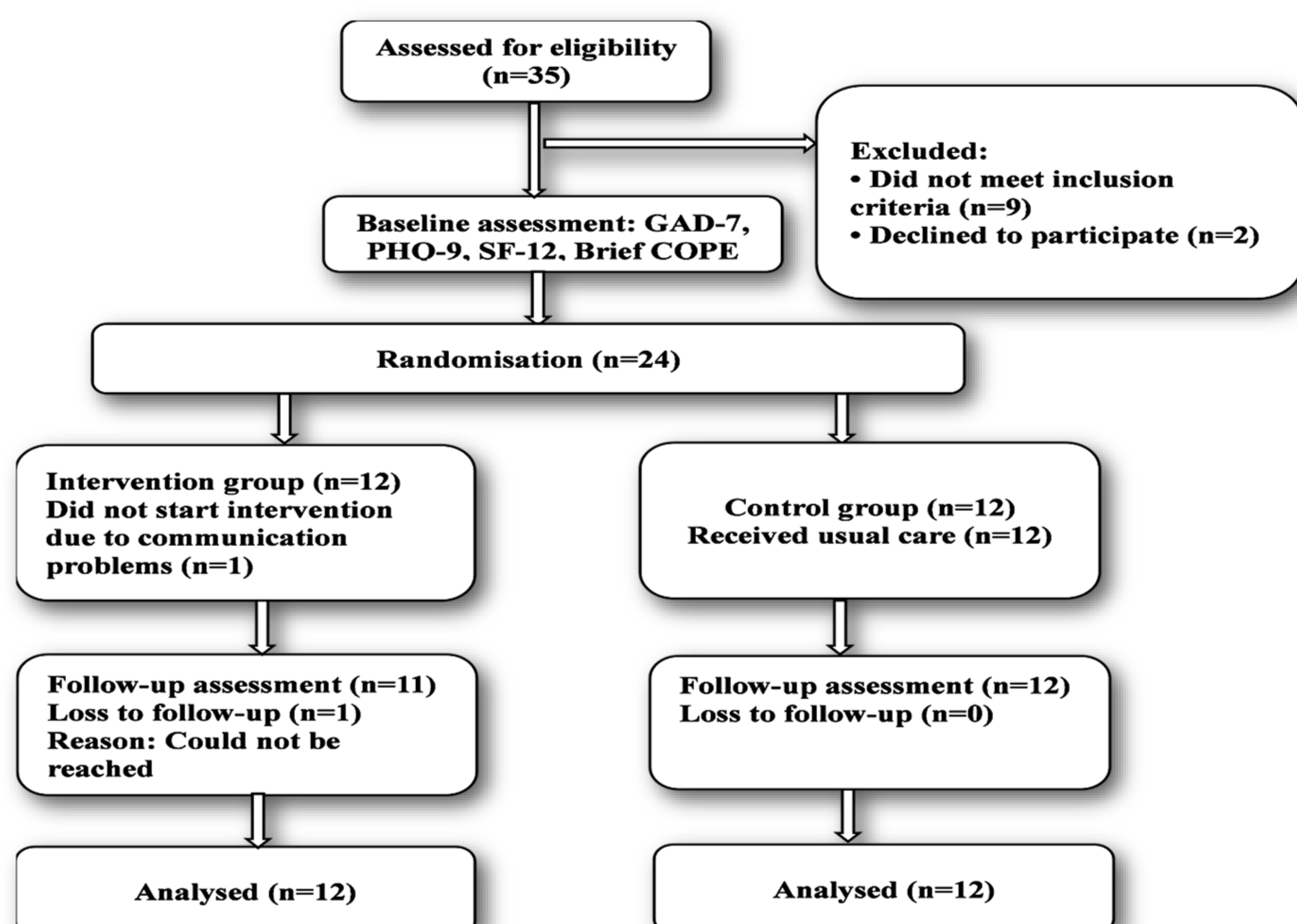
Outcomes

- Anxiety, depressive symptoms, coping and health-related quality of life.
- The feasibility of intervention: enrolment rate, attrition rate, and adherence to intervention.
- Acceptability: Qualitative interviews with participants in the intervention group.



RESULTS

Figure: Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials Flow Chart



RESULTS

Feasibility of Intervention

- The enrolment rate was 92.3%, the attrition rate was 4%, and adherence to the intervention was 84%.

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes from the Qualitative Interviews

Themes	Subthemes
Benefits of the psychoeducation intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved knowledge Reduced stress Networking and psychological support Hope and Encouragement
Perceptions of the Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with the intervention Adequacy of the intervention
Suggestions for Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention to be provided early in the diagnosis stage

Table 2: Preliminary Effects of Psychoeducation Intervention

Outcome Variables	Intervention Group (n=12, Mean ± SD)	Control Group (n=12, Mean ± SD)	t- statistics	p	d
Anxiety levels					
Before Intervention	8.58±3.78	8.92±2.91	0.506	0.618	0.207
After intervention	3.25±3.44	7.17±4.37	2.482	0.021*	1.013
Depressive symptoms					
Before intervention	7.17±6.03	9.17±6.00	0.564	0.579	0.230
After intervention	3.50±3.85	10.58±6.83	2.245	0.035*	0.917
Health-related Quality of Life					
Physical health components					
Before intervention	50.24±8.97	55.52±8.09	1.512	0.145	0.617
After intervention	55.68±8.16	57.72±12.31	-0.667	0.512	0.275
Mental health components					
Before intervention	22.31±6.86	22.54±7.66	0.078	0.939	0.032
After intervention	23.81±5.20	20.23±9.53	-1.148	0.267	0.469
Coping					
Problem-focused coping					
Before Intervention	22.50±3.80	22.58±2.97	0.000	1.000	0.00
After Intervention	24.00±3.81	19.58±3.63	-2.539	0.019*	1.036
Emotion-focused coping					
Before Intervention	27.08±5.26	29.50±4.78	1.178	0.252	0.481
After Intervention	30.16±4.04	30.41±4.66	-0.805	0.430	0.328
Avoidant coping					
Before Intervention	18.25±2.96	18.92±2.87	0.537	0.596	0.219
After Intervention	16.33±2.70	21.16±2.20	2.697	0.013*	1.101

CONCLUSION

- The study findings suggest that the psychoeducation intervention is a feasible, acceptable, and promising intervention for alleviating anxiety and depressive symptoms and improving coping among the caregivers of children with cancer.
- Considering the limitations of a pilot study, a comprehensive trial with a large sample size is needed to establish conclusive evidence.

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