

Phoenix Rising: A wellbeing approach to understanding burn recovery in the Indian health system

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The research topic addressed in this paper analyses the wellbeing of burn survivors and their caregivers in the process of burn care within the Indian health system. Burn injuries occur frequently in India and literature reveals that these injuries have a substantial negative effect on the quality of life of the survivors. Quality of life within public health research is often narrowly defined. A wellbeing approach allows for a holistic and subjective view of the burn recovery experience and places emphasis on socioeconomic, cultural and relational factors affecting the wellbeing of burn survivors and their caregivers. This approach directed this research and differentiates it from the plethora of research on quality of life for burn survivors. Qualitative research was conducted in India by means of nine in-depth interviews with burn survivors and their caregivers. The researcher analysed this data and found that participants faced various challenges on their journey to recovery at an individual, family and community level as well as at a broader health system level. Key contextual findings also emerged; these were issues around the use of local medicines, occupational burns and self-inflicted burns. This research helps to identify challenges within burn care in the Indian health system and furthermore contributes towards shaping public health policy to be more client-centered and holistic. This will encourage the development of appropriate, sustainable and effective interventions which allow burn survivors to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of their injury with resilience and hope.