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## Growing up and living with childhood chronic illness: emerging adult's lived experience

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**Statement of the Problem:** Young people growing up with chronic illness are concurrently transitioning to adulthood and their transfer to adult health services. For some young people there is a struggle to achieve their authentic identity which can be sabotaged by their illness. The successful management of childhood onset disease has meant that many young people with previous lethal diseases are now living with their illness successfully into adulthood. This coupled with the increased prevalence of childhood onset chronic illness (COCI) such as asthma and diabetes has altered the landscape of chronic illness among young people (Perrin et al. 2007). The WHO report (2007) prevalence rates of chronic illness among adolescents as high as 15% and over 90% of these young people will survive into adulthood (Pai and Ostendorf 2011). With the success of healthcare in extending the lives of young people with chronic illness come the challenges associated with this developmental period. The young adult period often falls outside child and adult health care. This has led to a significant gap in the comprehensive body of research on emerging adults with chronic illness that is present in the adult and paediatric literature. Exploring this age group is critical because of the challenges both developmentally and emotionally that young people face entering adulthood (Snelgrove 2012).

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** A qualitative inquiry using hermeneutical phenomenology was employed focusing on the experience of emerging adult's aged between 18 and 25 years, enlarging their experience and attempting to understand it in the complexity of its context.

**Conclusion & Significance:** Historical experiences as well as the current experiences of emerging adults living with chronic illness since childhood were explored in this study. It is essential that we understand the commonalities and diversities of emerging adulthood as one phenomenon and chronic illness as another and how they interact at different stages in the young adults biography.

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**Notes:**