Exploring The Reasons For Late Reporting Of Childhood Cancer Cases For Treatment At Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital

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Background

Childhood cancer when reported early has a good prognosis and increases the survival rate. Normally, parents report these childhood cancer cases at stage 3 and 4 when it is more difficult and expensive to treat. The aim of this article seeks to explore the reasons of this late reporting of childhood cancers to Komfo Anokye Teaching hospital (KATH) and how they can be mitigated.

Method

Parents of 70 patients diagnosed with cancer from January to December 2020 were interviewed on when they detected their children had cancer, when it was reported to our facility and why they reported at our hospital at that time.

Results

After careful analysis of the data and information, the study reveals that 40 of these patients were males and 30 females with 45 of them being less than 5 years old whiles 25 were between the ages of 5 and 14 years. The most common type of cancer presented was Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia n=18 (25.7%) followed by Nephroblastoma, n=14 (20%), then Retinoblastoma, n=13 (18.6%), Burkitt’s lymphoma n=12 (17.1%), Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma n=10 (14.2%) and Rhabdomyosarcoma, n=3 (4.2%). The main reasons for the late report of these childhood cancer cases by parents are limited knowledge on childhood cancers and their treatments, superstitious beliefs and lack for funds for transportation and investigations.

Conclusion

Although, there were many reasons sighted, lack of education and limited knowledge on childhood cancer and its treatment has been the major cause of the delay in reporting childhood cancers. Parents were unable to detect early warning signs of the cancer. Stakeholders must step up childhood cancer education to promote early detection of the cancers.