Profile Of Childhood Cancer Cases Seen At The Paediatric Oncology Unit Of A Tertiary Hospital In Ghana - A 10 Year Review

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Introduction
Childhood cancers though curable have inequalities in outcomes between low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Global initiative on Childhood cancer (GICC) has a goal of increasing survival rate at least by 60% by 2030 while reducing suffering and improving quality of life for children with cancer globally.

The main aim for this study was to assess the trends in yearly proportions and numbers of cases seen and to evaluate the survival patterns and also to serve as a baseline as interventions are implemented in tandem with the WHO GICC.

Methods
A retrospective study was conducted to review secondary data from the paediatric cancer registry of all patients diagnosed with cancer from 2011-2020. Demographic and clinical data stored in excel was exported to Stata and analysed. Outcome data included death or alive.

Results
Total number of patients diagnosed were 1,094 with the lowest number of new patients (n=84) seen in 2012 and the highest (n=132) seen in 2014. There was a Male: Female ratio of 1.4:1. The commonest cancers seen was lymphomas forming about 38.1% of the new diagnosis made. The incidence of lymphomas reduced from 62.8% in 2011 to 23.0% in 2020. Proportions for Acute leukaemia's also increased from 11.3% in 2011 to 23.8% in 2020. Number of patients alive in reference to the year of diagnosis was lowest in 2016 with 29% of patients being alive. Subsequent years have higher survival with 53% of patients in 2019 still alive. Leukaemia treatment is expensive and unaffordable and translated to poor outcomes as patients tend to abandon treatment.

Conclusion
This baselines preliminary data showed a reducing trend in the incidence of lymphomas with an increase in the number of leukaemia patients seen but poor outcomes in patients with leukaemia. This calls for concerted effort with interventions to improve on the outcome and be able to reach the 60% survival goal for the WHO GICC.