

Retinoblastoma management during the COVID-19 pandemic: a report by the Global Retinoblastoma Study Group including 194 centers from 94 countries

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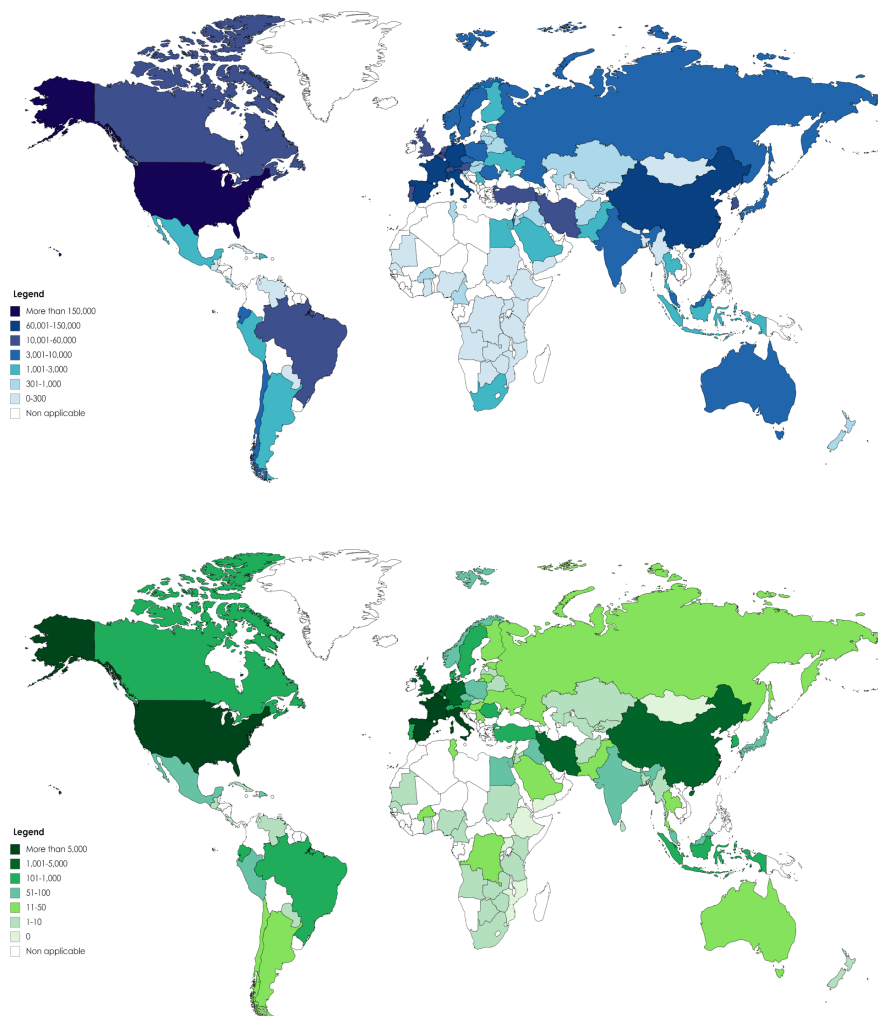
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Abstract

Background The Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19), evolving into a pandemic, resulted in medical resources being shifted to crisis management. Anecdotal evidence suggests that treatment of retinoblastoma, the most common intraocular cancer, is compromised by policy changes during the pandemic, risking children's lives. **Procedure** The Global Retinoblastoma Study Group that comprises most retinoblastoma treatment centers across the world conducted a survey focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on retinoblastoma management from March 29 to April 4 2020. Data on COVID-19, including number of positive cases and reported deaths, in the same period were retrieved from the World Health Organization. **Results** Overall, 194 retinoblastoma centers from 94 countries and 6 continents representing nearly half of the estimated global annual incidence of retinoblastoma participated. As of April 4 2020, the number of COVID-19 positive patients and reported deaths in the participating countries were 1,165,380 and 63,720, respectively, representing over 95% of the global burden. Forty-two percent of the centers reported that families were restricted from travelling to them, and 38% reported disruption to retinoblastoma management from shortage or reallocation of personnel or equipment. Enucleation was still available in 90% and intravenous chemotherapy in 97% of the centers, but 54% of them reported that changes and restrictions outside or within the center were potentially affecting the lives of retinoblastoma patients. **Conclusions** Shift in health care resources and pandemic policies at a national level may be hazardous for children with retinoblastoma.

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