

Treatment results in childhood cancer between 1996-1999 in a Cancer Center in Romania – A transition period

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Abstract

Background: Improved diagnostic and treatment methods in childhood cancer determined a significant increase in survival in the last decades. However, despite these important progresses, there is still a significant difference in survival between developed countries compared to developing and underdeveloped countries. For more insight into these differences we studied treatment results of the Paediatric Department of the Institute of Oncology “Prof. Dr. I. Chiricuta” from Romania between 1996-1999. Design/Methods: We included 202 patients under the age of 18, diagnosed and treated for malignant tumours in our Department. Data about diagnosis, treatment, acute toxicities, treatment response, relapse (date, treatment, response), second cancer were extracted from patient files. Survival curves were calculated with the Kaplan Meier method. Results: From the 202 patients included in our study 41.6% (84) were diagnosed with malignant blood disorders and 58.4% (118) with solid tumours. After completing the primary treatment, 146 patients (72.3%) showed complete response, 14 patients (6.9%) showed partial response, 6 patients (3%) showed stable disease, and 36 patients (17.8%) showed progressive disease. The median follow-up was 245.9 months (20.5 years). OS at 20 years was 58% for the entire studied group (CI: 51-64%), while DFS was 53% (CI: 46-60%). The second neoplasia was diagnosed in 3 patients (1.48%) of the studied group. Conclusion: Access to treatment and application of current therapeutic protocols has a major impact on survival in paediatric oncology. Our results show promise, however they were lower than in developed countries in the same period of time.

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abbreviations key

IOCN	Institute of Oncology Cluj Napoca “Prof. Dr. Ion Chiricuta” Cluj-Napoca
CTCAE	Common Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events
ALL	Acute lymphoblastic Leukaemia
AML	Acute myeloblastic leukaemia
RMS	Rhabdomyosarcomas
CNS	Central nervous system
ALL-BFM	Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia – Berlin-Frankfurt-Muenster
HL	Hodgkin Lymphoma
NHL	Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
SIOP	Society of Paediatric Oncology
OS	Overall survival
DFS	disease-free survival
CI	Confidence interval

Key words: Childhood cancer, survival, developing countries

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