Cancer in Teenagers in South Africa

A Focus On

Leading Cancers in SA Teens

According to the National Cancer Registry 2014:

Hodgkin Lymphoma & Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
► are two of the leading cancers seen in teens in SA
► account for 24% of the cancers in teens

Children and adolescents with Hodgkin Lymphoma have a 5 year overall survival rate of 79% in SA

Factors relating to lower survival rates, amongst others include HIV infection and advanced stage disease

Dr Jennifer Geel, a CANSA funded researcher says:
► “The survival for HIV positive children drops to approximately 45%”
► “Nutrition is a major factor in whether a patient survives or not”
► “Patients who present earlier do better”

The best chance of surviving Hodgkin Lymphoma is to be a part of the study being conducted at paediatric oncology units across South Africa. Any doctor who is treating a patient up to the age of 22 years old are encouraged to contact her to contribute to the research study to improve the lives of children, adolescents and young adults diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma in South Africa.

(Email: jennifer.geel@wits.ac.za)
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Understanding Lymphoma

Lymphoma is a type of cancer that starts in cells called lymphocytes, which are a type of white blood cell and form part of the body's immune system.

The lymph system is part of the body's immune system, which helps fight infections and some other diseases. It also helps fluids move around in the body.

Both types of lymphocytes can develop into lymphoma cells.

DIFFERENCES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-HODGKIN LYMPHOMA</th>
<th>HODGKIN LYMPHOMA</th>
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<tr>
<td>May arise in lymph nodes anywhere in the body</td>
<td>Typically begins in the upper body, such as the neck, chest or armpits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reed-Sternberg cells not present</td>
<td>Reed-Sternberg cells are present</td>
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<tr>
<td>More aggressive treatment is required for this cancer</td>
<td>Slow growing cancer with good survival rates, easier to treat</td>
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<tr>
<td>May be associated with HIV but not always so</td>
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“I want people to know that cancer is not a death sentence”.
- Girl aged 15, Leukaemia, Howick, KZN
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Risk Factors

An important risk factor in Non Hodgkins Lymphoma (NHL) is having a weakened immune system:

- Some children are born with an abnormal immune system because of a genetic (inherited) syndrome
- Along with increased risk of serious infections, these children also have higher risk of developing NHL (and other cancers)

- Infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which can weaken the immune system
- Children with HIV generally get the infection from contact with their mother’s blood, usually before or during birth
- HIV infection is a risk factor for developing NHL

These and other known risk factors probably account for only a small portion of cancers in teenagers

- In most cancers in children and adolescents, there are no known risk factors
- Focus needs to be on being aware of signs and symptoms
- Early diagnosis is key
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Signs and Symptoms of Lymphoma

► Enlarged lymph nodes (seen or felt as lumps under the skin)
► Swollen belly
► Feeling full after only a small amount of food
► Shortness of breath or cough
► Fever
► Weight loss
► Night sweats
► Feeling very tired

Pay attention to the overall warning signs of Childhood Cancer:
www.cansa.org.za/warning-signs-childhood-cancers/
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Saint Siluan Warning Signs
for Childhood & Teen Cancer

Seek medical help early for ongoing symptoms

White spot in the eye, new squint, sudden blindness or bulging eyeball

Lump on the stomach, pelvis, head, arms, legs, testicle or glands

Unexplained - fever present for over 2 weeks, weight loss, fatigue, pale appearance, easy bruising & bleeding

Aching bones, joints, back, easy fractures

Neurological signs, a change in walk, balance or speech, contiguous headaches with/without vomiting, enlarged head

www.cansa.org.za
TOLL FREE 0800 22 66 22

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How CANSA makes a difference

CANSAs Tough Living with Cancer (TLC)
childrens support programme embraces a holistic approach to include the emotional and social well-being of parents (guardians), children / teens and their siblings. CANSA TLC also offers support to the child who has a parent or sibling that has been diagnosed with cancer who sometimes has become a caregiver.

We offer the following services:
▶ sharing cancer related information
▶ counselling services and support groups
▶ providing terminal and grief support
▶ volunteer training
▶ hospital support and ward programmes
▶ prosthetic assistance (loss of an eye or limb)
▶ ports (broviacs) to minimise trauma and other medical equipment
▶ school and community awareness and education programmes
▶ providing accommodation for parents (guardians) near treatment centres at our CANSA TLC Lodges – Polokwane, Pretoria, Durban
▶ providing food & basic essentials parcels to families in need

*Please note that services will vary in different provinces

“Life forced me to be strong at a very young age. Having a support system as your family and friends is important. I wish the world could have more fathers like Chief, those who will support you every step of the way.”
- Girl, diagnosed with Leukaemia at 15, now 22. Batho, Mangaung

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