

Single Centre Experience of Treating Children with Cancer in The United Arab Emirates

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Introduction: Cancer is a leading cause of death in children. Advancements in medical sciences have significantly improved childhood cancer outcomes. However, the pattern of malignancy and outcomes of childhood cancer in the UAE have not been published in the literature in the recent period. Therefore, we aim to investigate this in Burjeel Cancer Institute (BCI), Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Methodology: This is a retrospective study. We collected data including diagnosis, age at diagnosis, treatments used, e.g., chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, immunotherapy, and bone marrow transplant (BMT), and outcomes. Overall survival (OS) and Event-Free Survival (EFS) were estimated by the Kaplan-Meier method.

Results: There are 82 children with cancer. The male-to-female ratio is 1.2. Most patients (45%) were diagnosed between one to five years of age. The most common malignancies are B cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (32, 39%), brain tumours (12, 15%); Neuroblastoma (9, 10%), Hodgkin Lymphoma (8, 9%) and Wilms Tumour (5, 6%); Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (3, 4%); Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (3, 4%); Ewing Sarcoma (3, 4%); T ALL (2, 2%); Osteosarcoma (2, 2%); Angiosarcoma (1, 1%); Synovial Sarcoma (1, 1%). 28 (34%) of patients had completed all treatment at BCI; 15 (18%) had completed their treatment at another centre and attending follow-up at BCI; and 5 (6%) commenced their treatment at BCI and were transferred to another centre.

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34 (41%) are currently still undergoing treatment at BCI. The abandonment rate is 0%. Overall survival is 94%, and event-free survival is 93%.

Conclusion: The results of our study are comparable to the international standard. More studies involving multiple centres in the UAE are needed to ascertain the exact pattern of paediatric malignancy and outcomes in the UAE.