

## Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia in Children

Cancer in any of its forms is known to the society as a condition of adults or elder persons; still it can occur at any age even during the care-free childhood period. Children diagnosed with cancer must rapidly grow up and learn how to face the illness as well as their parents that will have to be able to care for them. The most common form of malignant tumors in children is the acute lymphocyte Leukemia and it is known to affect about 2500 pediatric patients every year. The acute forms of Leukemia develop rapidly and spread to the entire body in just a few months if left untreated. Knowing how to recognize the disease seems to be most important as Leukemia can lead to death in a very short time if not treated properly. Leukemia develops inside the bone marrow and spreads to the lymph nodes, liver, spleen and nervous system. Cancerous marrow cells produce abnormal blood cells; insufficient or inefficient red blood cells lead to anemia, a low number of white blood cells leaves the body helpless to infections, and decreased number of platelets caused bruising and bleedings. General symptoms like headaches, weakness or vomiting also occur when the cancer reaches other main organs. No way of prevention is known to us today as leukemia cannot be linked to any lifestyle factors. A good life expectation can only be reached if a doctor is seen immediately when symptoms occur and a proper treatment is quickly administered. The most specific diagnose is the bone marrow biopsy when a small amount of marrow is extracted from the thighbone with a needle. The microscopic examination of the tissue can establish the presence of cancerous cells inside the bone marrow. Further analysis includes blood tests for searching changes in number and function of the three vital blood cells. In Leukemia a risen number of white cells are found together with a decreased number of red ones. Through the blood tests certain diagnose of the particular form of blood cancer can be established. Cancer cells are dangerous as they divide very quickly and an efficient primer treatment with chemotherapy must stop their multiplication. More types of chemotherapeutics are required to kill all cancerous cells as Leukemia is known to spread very rapidly throughout the whole body. The drug therapy is a long-lasting process and can produce several side-effects such as hair loss, infections, tiredness, nausea, anorexia and vomiting. New ways of therapy are searched that should only affect the cancerous cells unlike conventional drugs. The stem cells transplantation targeting to replace the lost marrow working cellularity seems to give hopeful results. Blood cancer can reoccur and therefore a treatment with stem cells can give more effective results. If Leukemia cannot be treated, doctors try ways of making the patient's life with cancer easier by relieving the symptoms. About 85% of the children that have survived 5 years without cancer reoccurring are considered to have been cured.

## About the Author

Created by a music therapist, with information on music therapy, commonly asked questions, schools and education, focus populations, links, message.

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