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The Mortality Burden among Egyptian Children and Adolescents with Cancer: Single-Center Experience

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INTRODUCTION

Incidence rates of pediatric cancer tend to increase over the years. Pediatric cancer is now considered a main cause of global disease burden, particularly in resource-limited settings, attributed to the large numbers of children with cancer (84% of global estimates), high mortality rates, and limited resources.

AIM

To evaluate the frequency of deaths among children diagnosed with cancer in the last 10 years and to assess possible etiology and risk factors of death among these children.

METHOD

Retrospective descriptive study conducted in the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Unit, Children's Hospital, Ain Shams University. Data from patients with pediatric cancer were collected from October 2010 to October 2020, including patient characteristics, disease characteristics, and death-related data regarding timing and possible causes (treatment related mortality, infectious complications, or other different causes.

RESULTS

Data from 500 patients were analyzed. The median age was (IQR) 4.25 (2.5-8.0) years. There was male predominance (54.4% vs 45.6%). At the time of the study, 357 (71.4%) were alive and 143 (28.5%) were dead; among the 143, 37 (25.9%) died within 30 days after diagnosis (early death). Of the 143 patients who died, 88 had hematological malignancies and 55 had solid tumors. The most frequent cause of mortality among these patients was acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL; 31.8%), followed by acute myeloid leukemia (AML; 19.6%). Moreover, early death was significantly higher among those with hematological malignancy than among patients with solid tumors (34.1% vs 12.7%) (*P*=.005).The main cause of death among patients with hematological malignancies was infection (55.7%)

CONCLUSIONS

mortality among children with cancer is relatively better than the previous published Egyptian data, yet lower than international figures in developed countries. Moreover, among the included cases the most cTheommon etiology of cancer and of death was ALL and AML..

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