CHILDHOOD CANCER NUGGETS

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1. Childhood cancers are cancers found in children 19 years and below

* 400,000 children and adolescents are diagnosed of cancer each year
* 8/10 of these occur in children in developing countries like Ghana

1. Most cancers in children do not have a known cause;

* However, some childhood cancers are associated with infections like HIV, Hepatitis B, EBVirus and Malaria

1. Most cancers in children do not have a known cause;

* However, 10% of children with cancer come from families with a history of cancer

1. Childhood cancers affect every part of the body; blood, brain, eye, muscle, skin and bone

* The commonest cancer in children is cancer of the blood known as Leukemia

1. 8 of 10 children with cancer survive in high income countries.

* Unfortunately, in low middle income countries like Ghana, 2-4/10 children survive cancer

1. To bridge the gap between the survival rate in High Income Countries and Low Middle-Income Countries like Ghana, we need to detect the disease early.

* Early detection leads to better outcomes
* Late detection leads to poor outcome

1. Childhood cancer awareness is even low among healthcare professionals.

* For any persistent symptom, **Consider Childhood Cancer (CCC).**

1. A significant proportion of children with cancer are diagnosed late due to delays in referring for appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

* Break the cycle, timely referral leads to better outcome.

1. Early detection and prompt referral leads to timely access to treatment.
2. Early diagnosis means lower intensity treatment and ultimately reduction in long- and short-term toxicities.
3. Early detection and diagnosis means lower intensity of treatment and ultimately reduces cost to family and the health systems.
4. Early diagnosis improves survivorship. Always **Consider Childhood Cancer.**
5. Delays in diagnosis and appropriate referral leads to unnecessary guilt by parents and caregivers.

* Break the cycle, refer appropriately.

1. Unnecessary delays in diagnosis and treatment leads to decreased trust in health care providers and the health system.

* **Consider Childhood Cancer-CCC** and refer on time.

1. **Consider Childhood Cancer-CCC**, when there are lumps and swellings on any part of the body.
2. **Consider Childhood Cancer-CCC**, when a child presents with unexplained pallor, weight loss and easy bruising.
3. **Consider Childhood Cancer-CCC**, when a child presents with white spot on the eye, swelling of the eye, bruising around the eye and a new-onset squint.
4. **Consider Childhood Cancer -CCC**, when there is persistent headache, early morning vomiting and loss of balance.
5. **Consider Childhood Cancer-CCC**, when there is persistent back, joint or bone pain.
6. For unexplained weight loss and persistent fevers, **Consider Childhood Cancer** and refer.
7. Children with cancers experience intense physical and emotional pain from the disease and its treatment.

* Be kinder and generous to a child with cancer

1. Life after cancer can be challenging, reach out to childhood cancer survivors and their families in your community
2. Leukemia is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. It causes symptoms like bone and joint pains, persistent fevers, weight loss, bleeding and it spreads quickly. Seek treatment early
3. Retinoblastoma is cancer of the eye. The earliest sign is a white spot in the eye and new onset squint. If nothing is done, the eye can become swollen and it can spread into the brain. Seek treatment early
4. Osteosarcoma is cancer of the bone. It causes persistent bone pain and swelling of the bone. It spreads rapidly to the lungs and can cause breathlessness. Seek treatment early.
5. Children with cancer have a high chance of developing malnutrition. Nutritional supplementation are required for improved nutrition.
6. Burkitts Lymphoma is a cancer of the lymph nodes. Commonly presents with a jaw mass with an extension into the mouth. It is curable if diagnosed early. Seek treatment early
7. Brain cancers normally present with early morning vomiting, persistent headaches, disturbances in walking and can lead to unconsciousness. Seek treatment early.
8. It takes a village to cure a child with cancer. NGO’s, Religious bodies, Institutions, companies and individuals must all get involved.
9. Strength is a child fighting cancer with a smile on the face.
10. A child with cancer affects everyone in the family. We need to stand with them and fight childhood cancer together