

# Palliative Care in Paediatric Oncology: Is there a role?

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YES!!!!!!!

THANK YOU!

# Paediatric palliative care

- Common childhood diseases
- Palliative care team
- Symptom & symptom management
- Psychosocial aspects of care
- Death
- Bereavement

# Paediatric palliative care

- Symptom management to improve the quality of life.
- Empowerment
- Trust, openness and honesty
- Clear communication
- Emotional safety
- Respect for and understanding of the family dynamics

# Common Childhood diseases

- Cancer
- Genetic disorders
- Neuromuscular conditions
- Cardiac
- Metabolic disorders
- Prematurity

# Childhood Cancers in TT

- 30 new cases / year
- Crude incidence 75 per million per year
- Common cancers: Leukaemia / brain tumours/ renal tumours / lymphoma account for the majority of cancers
- Survival is approximately 70%

# Team

- Child
- Parents / guardian
- Doctor
- Nurse
- Family /Friends
- Psychologist / psychiatrist
- Social worker

# Symptoms

- Pain
- Constipation
- SOB
- Nausea / vomiting
- Seizures
- Poor intake / electrolyte imbalance
- Bleeding



# Symptom management

# Pain

- Identify cause
- Somatic vs neuropathic pain
- Paracetamol /codiene /morphine/ fentanyl
- Carbamazepine / amitriptyline / gabapentin / ketamine

# Constipation

- Lactulose / Docusate /Codantramer /Senna
- Enema

# SOB

- O<sub>2</sub> therapy
- Diazepam / midazolam
- Neb Morphine

# Nausea / vomiting

- Tropisetron / Metoclopramide / Domperidone
- Cyclizine
- Dexamethasone

# Seizures

- Diazepam / Midazolam

# Poor intake / electrolyte imbalance

- IV vs NGT
- When to correct electrolyte imbalance

## Bleeding

- Transfusion
- Tranexamic acid / Adrenaline 1:1000

# Other therapies

- Chemotherapy – Vincristine / cyclophosphamide / Doxorubicin
- Radiotherapy

# Psychosocial aspect

- Child
- Siblings
- Socioeconomic factors
- Extended family
- Religious / cultural issues

# Death

- Where home vs hospital
- Symptom control
- Practical issues
- Funerals



# Challenges

- Human resources / multitasking
- Drug availability
- Home care support
- Team debriefing

# Bereavement

- Stages:
  - Denial
  - Anger
  - Bargaining
  - Depression
  - Acceptance
- Follow up

# References

- Stickney,D. (1997). Water , Bugs & Dragonflies Continuum ISBN 0 826 46458 0
- Kaye, P. (2000). Flow-chart for symptom control. EPL publications. ISBN 0 951 1989588
- Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane (1999). A practical guide to paediatric oncology palliative care.
- The Royal Marsden hospital paediatric unit. Pharmaceutical symptom control guidelines.

# A young Person Dying

Though life cared to play withy me so short a time,  
True life comes in death, so my death is no great crime  
Instead I will play with immortality – he's always up for fun  
And we'll sit and laugh at Death – that funniest of puns.  
For everywhere I ever was, there I'll always be,  
But you'll have to drop your human eyes if you want to gaze on me.  
For I'll be your deepest soul and I'll be your deepest brain.  
But look out into the universe shortly after I die  
And concentrate intently on any twinkle in the sky.  
I'll be bungee jumping off Pluto, zooming around the sun,  
Piggy-backing angels. Yes! Death's a prize hard won.

Alan Burke