

Effects of chemotherapy on the oral health in pediatric oncology patients at the Kenyatta National Hospital

Gohil, T. R.; Mutave, R. J.; Dimba, EA

Abstract

Aim: To determine the most prevalent oral adverse effects faced by children undergoing chemotherapy treatment. **Study design:** A descriptive cross sectional study, conducted at the Kenyatta National Hospital. **Materials and methods:** A total of 42 paediatric oncology patients at the Kenyatta National Hospital wards and oncology out-patient clinics were included in the study. The principal investigator conducted a clinical examination and collected data using a questionnaire. **Results:** Majority of the patients examined were male, and the predominant cancer was acute lymphocytic leukemia with a prevalence of 28.6%. This finding contradicts a previous study, which mentions Burkitts lymphoma to be the most prevalent cancer among children around this region. The oral diseases which were most prevalent were dental caries (45%), followed by ulceration (40.5%) and mucositis (33.3%). Vincristine, cyclophosphamide, adriamycin and methotrexate are the drugs which cause the most adverse effects in the oral cavity. **Conclusion:** Thus, it is necessary that patients are educated on the importance of oral hygiene. Further studies need to be carried out regarding the high prevalence of dental caries and the predominance of acute lymphocytic leukaemia among the children at the Kenyatta National Hospital.