

Abstract

Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia(ALL), the most common childhood cancer, is highly responsive to chemotherapy. This study determined the demographic factors, common presentations, laboratory features, features of relapse and survival among childhood acute lymphoblastic leukaemia patients.

Results

A total of 53 eligible patients were studied for this study. There were 36 males and 17 females between the ages of 0 to 15. Twenty-eight patients belonged to the age group 1-5 years, 17 were between 5-10 years, 5 were between 10-15 years, 3 were less than 1 year. Symptoms and signs of the disease included fever without infection, infections, bone or joint pain, gait disturbance, abdominal distention, features of cranial nerve palsy, facial puffiness, hepatomegaly, splenomegaly, lymphadenopathy and haemorrhagic manifestation and one patient had had an episode of aplastic anaemia 2 months back. The white blood cell count was between $10-50 \times 10^9/L$ in 32 patients, less than $10 \times 10^9/L$ in 16 patients and above $50 \times 10^9/L$ in 4 patients. Haemoglobin level was less than 7g/L in 28 patients, between 7-10g/L in 20 and above 10g/L in 4 patients. The platelet count was less than $30 \times 10^9/L$ in 18 patients, between $30-100 \times 10^9/L$ in 22 patients above $100 \times 10^9/L$ in 12 patients. Forty-nine patients had FAB subtype ALL-L₁, 4 had L₂ subtype none had L₃ subtype. Thirty-nine patients had achieved their 1st remission within 28 days and 2 had taken more than 28 days to achieve 1st remission. Ten patients had relapsed their leukaemia and 27 patients did not relapse. Of these 10 patients 8 patients relapsed during maintenance 1 patient after completion of maintenance and the other one within 6 months of induction. Bone marrow was the site of relapse in 6 patients, 2 patients had testicular relapse, 1 had CNS relapse and the other one had combined relapse. Of these relapsed patients 4 patients achieved re-remission, 3 died during relapse and the other 3 were lost for follow up. Overall, 18 patients survived at the end of this study, 17 had died and the other 18 were lost for follow up

03 MAY 2005