

# Childhood cancer treatments cause chronic illness

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.med.diseases.cancer/2006-10/msg00072.html>

---

- *From:* E.Nigma <NoReply@xxxxxx>
  - *Date:* 16 Oct 2006 18:01:02 -0000
- 

October 12 2006

Childhood cancer treatments cause chronic illness later in life

<http://www.newstarget.com/020737.html>

(NewsTarget) Nearly 80 percent of children diagnosed with pediatric cancer will become long-term survivors due to advances in treatment, according to a new study published in the Oct. 12 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, but it also states that those survivors will likely live for 20 to 30 years with one or more chronic health problem caused by those treatments.

"It's important to put our findings into context," said Dr. Kevin Oeffinger, director of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center's Program for Adult Survivors of Pediatric Cancer and lead author of the study, which found that a little more than one-quarter of pediatric cancer survivors will have to deal with serious, even life-threatening conditions for decades.

"Cancer is a deadly disease and to cure it often requires fairly toxic therapy. Because children and teens have organs still in the growing stage, they're particularly vulnerable to the effects of these therapies, so it's common to see chronic health problems years after," Oeffinger said. "The silver lining, however, is that cancer survivors need to realize that some of these conditions can be prevented, and many can be reduced in severity."

The study analyzed information from the Childhood Cancer Survivor study, which detailed the lives of more than 10,000 survivors between the years of 1970 and 1986. A little more than 62 percent of the cancer survivors had at least one chronic health condition, and 27.5 percent had conditions that were severe or life-threatening. Seventy-three percent of patients who had been diagnosed with their cancer 30 years earlier had chronic conditions, and 42.4 percent had severe or life-threatening conditions.

The patients with the highest risk of serious, long-term side effects were those treated for bone cancer, central nervous system tumors, or

## Childhood cancer treatments cause chronic illness

Hodgkin's disease. Female survivors were at a 1.5 times increased risk of severe chronic conditions than males. Oeffinger said it was important for patients and health care providers to be aware of this increased risk for women.

"This study really highlights the increasing need for lifelong follow-up," said Dr. Philip Rosoff, director of the Duke University Hospital Program in Clinical Ethics at the Center for the Study of Medical Ethics and Humanities in the Division of Pediatric Hematology–Oncology. "Thinking about the late effects of treatment is a luxury we have that shows how successful we've become at curing childhood cancer.

"As the treatments for cancer in general get more successful, this is going to be an increasingly large portion of clinical practice. We need to raise the awareness of physicians of all backgrounds," he said.

Both Oeffinger and Rosoff said that all cancer patients should receive a treatment summary of their treatment types, dosages, and potential problems from treatment for their medical records. Oeffinger added that it was extremely important for cancer survivors to eat right, exercise and avoid habits such as smoking.

"There are natural alternatives to the toxic, harmful treatments offered by the conventional cancer industry," said Mike Adams, a consumer health advocate and creator of the HerbReference.com education web site. "Real medicine should help patients heal, not poison them with chemicals that damage their vital organs.

"Chemotherapy is extremely dangerous and causes permanent damage to the brain, liver, heart, kidneys and other organs."

###

.