Childhood Cancer Awareness among Undergraduate Medical Students in South India

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Background

The demand for paediatric oncology care, when compared to specialized medical care is found to be poor in developing countries. We conducted a study to determine the awareness and interest for paediatric oncology amongst the medical under graduates.

Aims & Objectives

To evaluate the current status of childhood cancer awareness among undergraduate medical students in South India and their interest in paediatric oncology career.

Material & Methods

This is a non randomized study. A 24 point questionnaire was given to the participants. Collected data was entered in an EXCEL SHEET and analysed by SPSS software.

Results

240 students who attended the MEDHOPE CONFERENCE 2012 from various universities in south India answered the questionnaire. 70% of them answered the basic knowledge questions about childhood cancer correctly. 55% of the students had not encountered paediatric oncology patients during their clinical postings. 40% did not have enough lectures on paediatric oncology. 29.6% felt that failure in effective treatment of childhood cancers was because of late diagnosis and referral and 21.4 % felt that it is because of lack of trained personnel in paediatric oncology field in our country. 50% were interested in pursuing paediatrics as their career but 80 % of them were not interested in pursuing paediatric oncology as their career.65.5% thought that the information they had on paediatric oncology was not enough to suspect and refer appropriately during their practice. 84% felt that there is a definite need to improve paediatric oncology teaching in their medical curriculum.

Conclusions

The outcome of this study shows that the clinical postings in paediatric oncology in the medical curriculum will improve the outcome of pediatric oncology care world wide.