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THE VALUE OF GOOD-QUALITY CANCER REGISTRIES

Early in my training as a registrar in paediatrics, I worked in a childhood cancer registry looking at data on the incidence of cancers in one region of the United Kingdom. In that process I learnt the value of accurate ascertainment of cases and the power of high-quality routine data collection.

Christina Stefan from the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Tygerberg Hospital, Stellenbosch University and the South African Medical Research Council has asked questions about the epidemiology of childhood cancer across Africa and uses 21 cancer registries from 18 countries to address the question.

The paper identifies important limitations in the data; no selection criteria for centres were applied, the registries were not all population-based. The data collected were not all histologically confirmed. These are important caveats in interpreting the data, but unlike developed countries, lymphomas, nephroblastoma, Kaposi sarcoma and retinoblastoma were the most common paediatric tumours in Africa.

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HOW COMMON IS NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURY IN A NIGERIAN HOSPITAL?

Child maltreatment has been increasingly recognized over the past 50 years and, sadly, occurs in many cultures. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has clear statements against maltreatment, but this convention right remains unprotected in many jurisdictions.

Oladele Simeon Olatunya from the Department of Paediatrics, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti and colleagues from Community Medicine, Federal Medical Centre and the Department of Surgery, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria have investigated this question with a prospective case series from a single institution, Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, over 17 months in 2012–2014.

In total, 44 cases were seen during the study period. This is equivalent to 0.84% of the 5,264 new patients seen and 21.3% of the 207 cases of injury consultations within this period at the Paediatric Outpatient Department. The case fatality rate was 6.8%. Physical abuse, sexual assault, drowning/near drowning, gunshot, poisoning and human bite caused the injuries in 68.2, 13.6, 6.8, 4.5, 4.5 and 2.3%, respectively.

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