

Determinants of delayed diagnosis among pediatric cancer patients at Ayder Comprehensive Specialized Hospital

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Background: Despite advances in the field of pediatric oncology cancer remains a leading cause of death in children. The delays in cancer diagnosis may occur throughout the diagnostic pathway. Diagnosis of childhood cancer as early as possible is crucial to reduce mortality. This study identified determinants of delayed diagnosis among pediatric cancer patients.

Method: A facility based cross-sectional study was conducted among pediatric cancer patients less than 18 years. Data collection was done by interviewer-administered structured questionnaire from the volunteer primary caregiver from 1st September 2017 to 30th August 2018. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 21 software. Diagnosis delay was considered significant when it is above the 3rd quartile. Binary logistic regression analysis was used to test associations between the determinant factors and the dependent variable. Finally, variables with P-value <0.05 were considered as determinants of delayed diagnosis.

Results: From a total of 102 patients, 71 (69.6%) of them had delayed diagnosis. Children older than 10 years of age were four (AOR=4.01; 95% CI=1.55-12, P<0.001) times more likely to get delayed relative to under five children. Rural residence (AOR=3.3; 95% CI=1.24-10.24, P<0.001), uneducated parents (AOR=3.4; 95% CI=1.91-13.25, P=0.009), parents with monthly income less than 1000 Ethiopian Birr (AOR=6.1; 95% CI=1.76-7.23, P<0.001), absence of health insurance (AOR=2.4; 95% CI=1.50-3.50, P=0.02), visit to holy water (AOR=3.4; 95% CI=1.6-7.2) and those who think cancer is incurable (AOR=2.7; 95% CI=1.3-14, P=0.004) were also likely to be delayed.

Conclusion: Delayed diagnosis of childhood cancer was a major issue and most influenced by the child's age, residency, family's socioeconomic status, parental education, health insurance, visit of holy water and caregiver's perception on curability of cancer. Thus, every effort should be made to promote public and parental awareness of childhood cancer and promoting health insurance.

Biography

Alemseged Berhane Tesfa has pursued his specialization in Pediatrics and Child Health from Mekelle University, Ayder Comprehensive Specialized Hospital. He had been Chief Pediatric Resident for which he received certificate of recognition. He is currently working as an Assistant Professor at Ayder Comprehensive Specialized Hospital and highly interested in evidence-based medicine in his future career.

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