Supportive and palliative care

Unique fund raising program for poor paediatric cancer patients: a little effort from a school level

A. Mukherjee, A. Mukhopadhyay
Molecular Biology, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Cancer Research Institute, Kolkata, India

Aim/Background: Our country, India, is a developing country where cancer treatment is costly to most of the patients and 60% of them cannot afford the full treatment. Paediatric cancer treatment costs INR 1-1.5 lac (1500-2500 $) per case. There are Chief Minister, Prime Minister and Governor Relief Funds to help the poor patients, but the practical problem is that after diagnosis, parents apply for the fund and sanction comes at least after 2 months. So many of them delay to start the treatment due to lack of fund. Our aim is to help those poor paediatric cancer patients so that they can start their treatment immediately before getting the relief funds, applied by them.

Methods: South Point High School is one of the largest schools in the continent having student capacity of 13000. I approached my friends and all other students to donate only one rupee (INR 1.0 only) per week per student throughout the year. We handed over the collection to the Oncologists of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Cancer Research Institute who selected the patients for donation.

Results: During the period from Jan to Dec, 2014, we collected INR 6, 38,000 ($ 9815) and helped 33 poor paediatric cancer patients whose parents have the average monthly income of INR 3000-8000 ($ 46 - 123). Male and female children ratio was 18: 15 and age range was 06 months to 12 years. Disease wise distribution was, ALL-11, AML-01, Hodgkin’s Lymphome- 05, Non Hodgkin’s Lymphoma- 04, Round cell tumour- 03, Retinoblastoma- 02, Germ cell tumour- 02, Wilm’s tumour- 02, Neuroblastoma- 01, Osteosarcoma- 02. We supported 33 patients for initial treatment with INR 12000-38000 ($ 185-585) according to their requirement after which they could complete their treatment with different Governmental Relief Funds, applied.

Conclusions: This is a unique fund raising model which can be an example for students to save a negligible amount of pocket money per week and bring smile to the parents of thousands of untreated paediatric cancer patients of district, state and country level in developing country like India.

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