



# THE SCOPE

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## THANK YOU

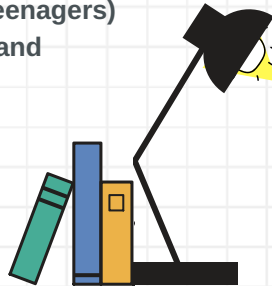
for your support for our first newsletter! In this issue, we would like to bring more awareness to the challenges faced by school-returning childhood cancer survivors. While children with cancer undergo difficult experiences at the hospital, children surviving cancer also experience many different challenges. In addition, we will also touch on the topic of quantitative research and its common data collection methods. Last but not least, find out what 351 participants tell us what they know about childhood cancer.

# Needs of Children with Cancer Who Have Returned to Mainstream School

by Khoon Chai Wee

## In the previous issue,

Our participants (16 parents and 4 teenagers) shared that their peer relationships and academics were affected due to prolonged absence from school. After they returned to school, they also had to make some emotional and physical adjustments due to the side-effects of treatment.

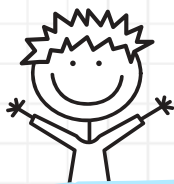


Children with cancer and their parents were also confronted with other schooling related challenges such as participation in school-related activities and school placement.

During this transition phase, their schools played an important role in providing support to ensure that the child's return was a seamless one.

## WHAT WERE SOME OF THE GOOD PRACTICES ADOPTED BY THESE SCHOOLS?

Diagnosis & Treatment



Maintaining regular contact / communication via face-to-face meetings, phone calls or phone messages

*"...We (parents and school teacher) communicate quite closely and the teacher visited (the child) regularly; when he was hospitalised or when he was back home"*  
(Parent A9)

Assurance that there was availability of place in school for child

*"...The teachers told the principal about the child's condition and the principal said that he would keep the place in school for the child..."*  
(Parent A16)

Being proactive and going the extra mile

*"...This waiving off of the school fees was a thing that we didn't expect. I think it was very nice of them to take the effort to waive off this fee, when they can just sit there and not do anything but they actually did that..."*  
(Parent A6)

Back-to-School

## Back-to-School

Flexibility in making exemptions and accommodations for child

"...the class was supposed to be on the second level, (but) they shifted to the first level, so that he doesn't (need to) go up and down (the stairs). Their class(room) is also near the toilet because he cannot walk very far...we also arranged no Physical Education for him...Also, the CCA he doesn't have (to participate) the teacher said it's okay..." (Parent A8)

Including child in school lessons, activities and events

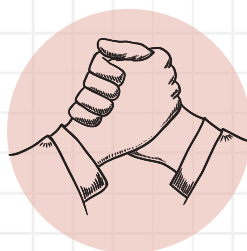
"...she even took part in the sports day in school, this 50m run, she is not very stable, so...I ran beside her. The main thing is actually for her to join in the fun. She also went for the Primary Five adventure camp... I'm the only parent there, so I feel very appreciative that the school actually made this arrangement... That's when they actually bond with their class...she actually tried all the activities. The high element, rock climbing and all these..." (Parent A4)

## Survivorship

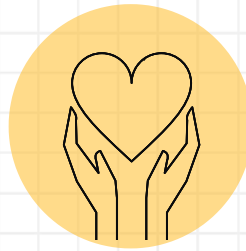
## IN GENERAL, SCHOOLS THAT ARE PERCEIVED AS SUPPORTIVE -



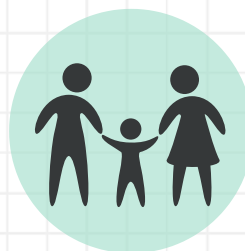
ENGAGED



PROACTIVE



SENSITIVE



INCLUSIVE



FLEXIBLE

THESE GOOD PRACTICES COULD SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR OTHER SCHOOLS WITH NO PRIOR DIRECT EXPERIENCE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH CANCER AND THEIR FAMILIES.

# QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research usually works with larger volume of data. One way of collecting these data is through surveys. Questions are commonly asked in the form of a checklist or rating scale e.g. the Likert scale. Some researchers may also make use of existing data (secondary data) such as official statistics for their quantitative studies.



If you have been asked to complete a questionnaire or survey, you may have been part of a quantitative study! This is the most common way of collecting data for quantitative studies. Why is that so? Under what circumstances will this method be more appropriate?

## WHY DO WE CONDUCT SURVEYS?

### EXTENSIVENESS: RECRUITING SIZABLE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS



This survey method allows the researcher to investigate the trends and patterns of a particular group of people. An example of a national-level survey would be the Household Expenditure Surveys conducted in many countries including Singapore. Recruiting the entire population (all Singaporeans) to find out their expenditure patterns would be extremely costly and time-consuming. Hence a sizable group of people that falls within the study criteria will be recruited to represent the entire population. Conclusions drawn from the study/survey can be generalised to the whole population.

### FLEXIBILITY: CAN BE CONDUCTED IN MANY MODES



Surveys can be interviewer-administered or self-administered. An interviewer may need to be present to explain the questions for studies involving a more illiterate population (e.g. elderly). In comparison, self-administered surveys may be preferred for time-poor population (e.g. working adults). Hard copy survey forms or web link of surveys are sent to participants to complete at their convenience with a deadline. Using the most appropriate modes for different study populations will ensure higher participation.

## Do you know? Awareness and Perception of Childhood Cancer in Singapore

by Khoon Chai Wee

Annually, more than 150 children are newly diagnosed with childhood cancer in Singapore. However, medical advancements in the field of paediatric oncology has made it possible for

**MORE THAN**

**80%**

of these children to survive childhood cancer.



Limited awareness & knowledge about childhood cancer could have several consequences such as **underestimating the resources required** to support children with cancer and their families, **less empathy and support** and also **stigmatisation of children with cancer.**

To better understand the current levels of awareness of childhood cancer in Singapore, we conducted a study to assess the public's knowledge, awareness and perception of childhood cancer.

**351 respondents** participated in our study

What are the most common types of childhood cancer?

What are some of the side-effects of treatment?

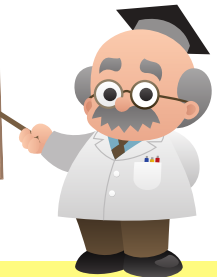
Does childhood cancer impact the whole family?

What are the different types of treatment for childhood cancer?

# What the public understands about childhood cancer and its impact on the child and family

## FACTS

DO YOU KNOW?



**LEUKAEMIA, BRAIN TUMOUR and BONE TUMOUR WERE VOTED AS THE TOP THREE MOST COMMON CHILDHOOD CANCER**

**The most common types of childhood cancer is Leukaemia, followed by Brain tumour and Lymphoma.**

### SAD, PAIN AND SUFFERING

**THESE ARE THE MOST COMMONLY USED WORDS THAT PARTICIPANTS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILDHOOD CANCER**

**Other studies<sup>1,2</sup> have shown that focusing only on the negative impacts of childhood cancer does not provide a full picture of the impacts of childhood cancer. It also diminishes the resilience of childhood cancer survivors and their family members.**

**MAJORITY OF OUR PARTICIPANTS VOTED THE FOLLOWING AS THE MOST COMMON SIDE-EFFECTS**

**94.6% - HAIR LOSS  
79.8% - NAUSEA AND VOMITING  
76.1% - LOSS OF APPETITE**

**Long term side-effects appeared to be less relatable with the general public. These late effects such as poor vision have a greater impact on the lives of children with cancer.**

1. Barakat, L. P., Alderfer, M. A., & Kazak, A. E. (2006). Posttraumatic Growth in Adolescent Survivors of Cancer and Their Mothers and Fathers. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 31*(4), 413-419.

2. Phipps, S., Long, A. M., & Ogden, J. (2007). Benefit Finding Scale for Children: Preliminary Findings from a Childhood Cancer Population. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 32*(10), 1264-1271. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsl052>

**Despite some gaps in knowledge, the general public exemplified a fair understanding of childhood cancer. They were also able to identify some of the support needed by children with cancer and their families throughout the illness trajectory. Can you guess what are these, using the images depicted below?**



**In conclusion, our study shows that more can be done to raise childhood cancer awareness in Singapore and enable a more balanced view of childhood cancer.**

Types of support - financial, medical, emotional / psychosocial, social

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## THANK YOU!

We hope that you've enjoyed reading the second issue of The Scope. The Scope is published bi-annually, providing you with exclusive insights into our latest research studies in a digestible format. Through sharing these bite-sized research findings, we hope that we can make research related to childhood cancer more accessible to everyone.

If you are interested to read about our studies in greater detail, the reports are located in the shared drive. Alternatively, contact anyone from the research team for reports, inquiries or feedback.

