



# THE SCOPE

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## Have you ever wondered...

why some children are diagnosed with cancer? Do you know how to provide support to children with cancer and their families? Besides the side-effects of treatment, what are some other challenges that these children with cancer and their families face? A childhood cancer diagnosis in the family may cause many changes and disruptions in their daily lives, affecting not only the child alone but the entire family, even the siblings! Read on to know more about the public perception of childhood cancer and its impacts on siblings. Interested to find out more about childhood cancer on your own? Read on for some tips to start your own literature review!

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

by Khoon Chai Wee

★ CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE... ★

## Public perception of childhood cancer & its implication

The public's perception and beliefs about childhood cancer can impact the way they act and behave around children with cancer and their families.

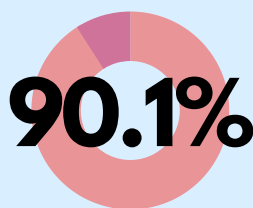
Let's take a look at what are some of these perceptions from 351 respondents.

### Impacts of childhood cancer & support required

#### CHALLENGES WITHIN THE FAMILY

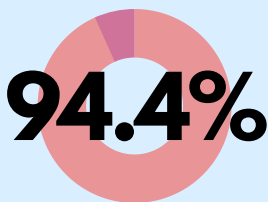


More than eight in ten respondents (87.3%) felt that childhood cancer impacts not only the child with cancer but also the entire family.



90.1% acknowledged that siblings will need to make many adjustments as a result of a child being diagnosed with cancer.

Almost one third of the respondents (32.1%) agreed that parents should just focus on the child who is ill.



94.4% of the respondents agreed that children with cancer will require long term medical follow ups.

93.3% of the respondents acknowledged that children with cancer have to make multiple adjustments when they return to school after treatment.

31.2% of the respondents did not identify bullying as an issue faced by children with cancer in school.



#### CHALLENGES AFTER TREATMENT

95.1% of the respondents felt that children with cancer will face many challenges even after treatment.



#### IN VIEW OF THESE CHALLENGES

99.1% of the respondents felt that children with cancer and their families require a lot of support.



97.9% of the respondents were optimistic that children with cancer can lead fulfilling lives despite their illness.



# Attribution of childhood cancer

## 1 Are parents responsible?

**89.1%**

felt that wrongdoing by parents was **NOT** a cause for childhood cancer.



**Female**

respondents, were less likely to attribute childhood cancer to wrongdoing by parents.

Respondents who have their

**close ones diagnosed with cancer**

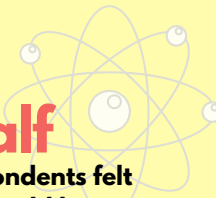
were less likely to attribute childhood cancer to poor care during fetal period and/or during the infancy stage.

## 2 Why did some children get cancer?

Respondents appeared split on whether there are parental and environmental factors leading to childhood cancer.



About **half** of the respondents felt that there could be some scientific explanations to why children get cancer.



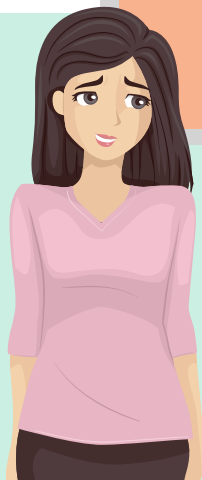
**96.5%**

recognised that contact with children with cancer **does not** cause childhood cancer. Childhood cancer is not contagious.

## Interaction with children with cancer

**46.3%**

expressed apprehension to interact with children with cancer because they were not sure what to do or say to the children.

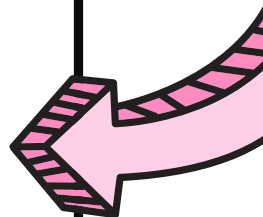
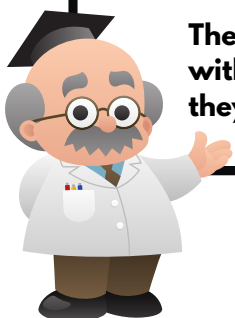


**48.9%**

did not know how they could support children with cancer.

The findings from this survey suggest that even when some members of the public's attribution of childhood cancer may not be totally accurate, it does not affect the support that they think children with cancer require.

Therefore, to increase the support that children with cancer require, sharing tips with the public on how they can support children with cancer as well as how they can interact with children with cancer and their families would be crucial.



Needs Assessment of Siblings Affected by Childhood Cancer: Parents' perspectives

by Lim Kai Yun

# IMPACTS OF CHILDHOOD CANCER ON SIBLINGS

This study seeks to understand the siblings' experiences from their parents' perspectives. As parents play a significant role in shaping siblings' adjustments and supporting siblings throughout the cancer trajectory, they would be the best informant and proxies for siblings.

We received a total of 98 surveys at the end of our data collection. Let's take a look at the impacts on siblings as observed by their parents.

## Increased responsibilities in daily life

Siblings who took on more tasks and responsibilities such as household chores (16.5%) and looking after other siblings (14.4%), are more likely to present these positive traits:



**Independent**



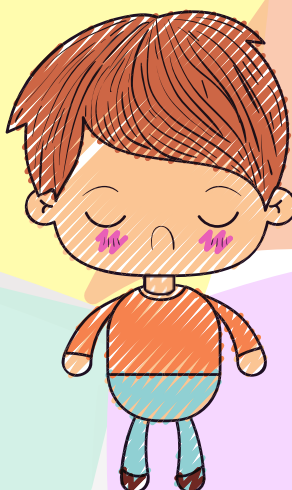
**Understanding**



**Sensible**



**Caring**



## Reduced family time

Majority of the siblings (70.1%) had fewer family outings. Out of this 70.1%, only one-quarter of them had more family time at home.

## Parental absence

**56.7%**

Spent less time with sibling

**53.6%**

Gave less attention to sibling

**33%**

Siblings spent more time alone at home

## Reduced supervision from parents

The lack of parental presence and attention also imply that parents may have less time to supervise siblings.



**41.2%** of the siblings received less coaching of schoolwork from their parents.

These siblings were either spending less time with parents or receiving less attention from parents.

## Positive / Supportive behaviours observed in siblings



More than one-third of the siblings become more independent (45.4%), sensible (37.1%), caring (38.1%) and understanding (36.1%) after the child with cancer was diagnosed.



**58.9%**

of the siblings were proactively offering help in taking care of the child with cancer.

These positive behaviours were among the top behavioural changes observed in the siblings.

## Seeking for more attention and care from parents

Among the siblings who kept asking about parent's whereabouts, **52.4%** of them were aged 3 to 6.

Siblings aged **3 to 6** showed more behaviors to seek for more parental attention and care compared to other age groups.



# BEHAVIOURS AND/OR REACTIONS OF SIBLINGS

## Feeling unfair

Parents reported that among the siblings who expressed feeling unfair...



**52.9%**

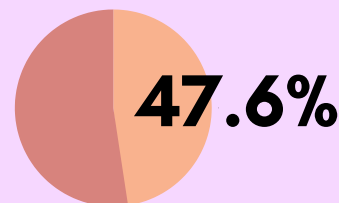
came from families with three children

**47.1%**

came from families with two children

## Become more temperamental

This behaviour was more prevalent among siblings aged 10 to 12.



Almost half the number of siblings in this age group were observed to have become more temperamental.



Siblings from different demographics and backgrounds react differently to the changes that childhood cancer has brought to their lives. Siblings are not equally impacted when a child is diagnosed with cancer. Some siblings may show positive and supportive behaviours, while others may present challenging behaviours. However, these behaviours are not mutually exclusive; some siblings may demonstrate both supportive and challenging behaviours. It is therefore important to understand how the experience brings about siblings' growth and development as much as their vulnerabilities.



LET'S GET STARTED!

# LITERATURE REVIEW

THE "REVIEW PROCESS" OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE ON A SPECIFIC TOPIC.



Learn about new concepts and ideas on the subject matters



Challenge or reaffirm our perspectives by exploring the diverse set of perspectives in the literature.



Inspire us by exploring alternate perspectives or solutions to the present situation.

## How to identify relevant articles?

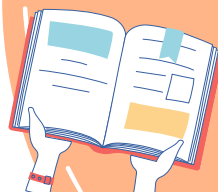
### Start wide then go deep

Search and identify relevant articles

Reorganise and identify what is known and what is unknown

Read the abstract and skim through the article to identify if it is worth exploring further

Do a detailed reading on the useful articles



## Search for articles!

You can search and access free journal articles on **Google, Google scholar** and/or **NLB OneSearch.**



START SEARCHING!

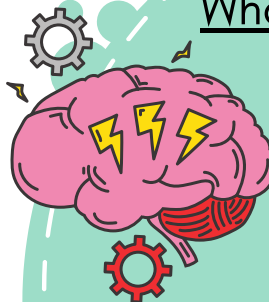


### Pro-tip!

**Citations are your best friends!**

Build on the literature review done by other researchers who will often cite other relevant articles on a topic of interest.

## What should you look for?



### Identify key concepts

of your topic. By focusing on concepts, it allows you to explore a wider range of relevant articles.

E.g. Siblings, well-being, parenting stress

### Finding perspectives over answers

Instead of looking for specific articles that fit perfectly to your situation, look for an array of articles that best describes and discuss your key concepts.

## PSSST! LOOK OUT FOR SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEWS!



These are papers that provide a cohesive idea of the current state of knowledge on a certain topic as well as recommendations for future actions and research.

# AN EXAMPLE: HOW TO SEARCH FOR ARTICLES ON Google Scholar

**RESEARCH QUESTION:  
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON THE WELL-BEING OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH CANCER**

**1** Before you start searching, identify your *key concepts*

These key concepts will serve as the guiding topics for the literature review process. Ideally, we will want to find articles that engage all three concepts. If we are unable to find these articles, we should look into articles that involved at least one or two of the key concepts.

- Impact of Covid-19
- Well-being of parents
- Parents of children with cancer

**2** Refine your *search terms*

Often, we will have the tendency to key in the entire research question into the search engine.

For example, we will search

**"What is the impact of COVID-19 on parents of children with cancer?"**



**PRO-TIP!**

**USE THE ADVANCE SEARCH TERMS**

**Ordering of terms**

However, the basic logic is that the term that is entered first will prioritise in the search results.

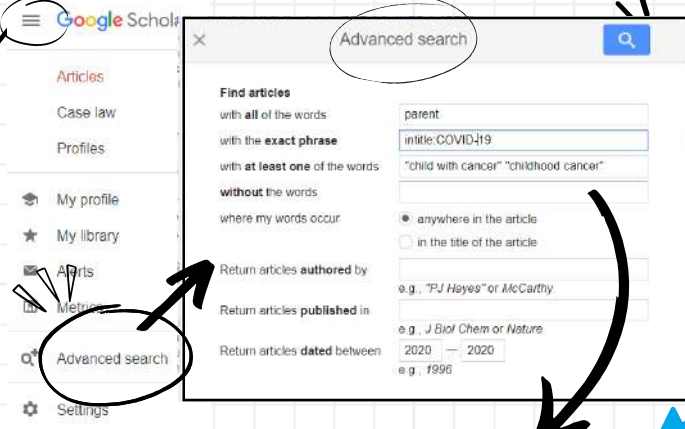
In this case, "Children with cancer", "Parents" and "COVID-19" will be considered less important than "Impact".

**Terms variation**

The terminology used to describe certain terms can also vary across studies. For example, there are other variations of "childhood cancer". The search will deprioritise studies that do not use the term actively in their paper.

**Therefore, start with your key terms!**

e.g. **"COVID-19" Parent "Child with cancer"**



**RESULTING SEARCH TERMS**

**Initle:"COVID-19" Parent "child with cancer" OR "childhood cancer"**

**3** Download the *relevant articles*

[PDF] Impact of caring for a **child with cancer** on parents' health-related quality of life [PDF] researchgate.net Full View

AF Klassen, R Klaassen, D Dix... - Journal of clinical ..., 2008 - researchgate.net

Anne F. Klassen, Robert Klaassen, David Dix, Sheila Pritchard, Rochelle Yanofsky, Mau O'Donnell, Amie Scott, and Lillian Sung From the Department of Pediatrics, McMaster University, Hamilton; Depart- ment of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

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## RESEARCH TEAM

Lim Kai Yun  
+65 6229 3767  
lim.kaiyun@ccf.org.sg

Zach Lee  
+65 6229 3714  
zach.lee@ccf.org.sg

Khoon Chai Wee  
+65 6229 3753  
khoon.chaiwee@ccf.org.sg

Ng Hwee Chin  
+65 6229 3727  
ng.hweechin@ccf.org.sg

## CREDITS

**Writers -**  
Khoon Chai Wee  
Lim Kai Yun  
Zach Lee

**Layout -**  
Lim Kai Yun

## THANK YOU!

We hope that you've enjoyed reading the third 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, please reach out to us via email.