

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS IN CHILDREN WITH CANCER

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The objective of this study is to evaluate the incidence of psychological problems in children following the diagnosis of cancer and its therapy, especially neurosis, behavior problems and hyperactivity. When doctors and nurses are aware of the possible psychological problems children may have, they are able to recognize and treat them early.

We examined 132 children, who were hospitalized in our Department, during the first, third and sixth month after the diagnosis and compared them with 100 healthy children. The questionnaire of Rutter et al for parents and teachers was used as an instrument for all the groups of children.

Children with cancer had significantly more psychological problems in the third month after the diagnosis, than during the first and the sixth months. They had also more psychological problems than the control group. Specifically, they present with hyperactivity ( $P=0,003$ ), neurosis ( $P=0,045$ ) and behavior problems ( $P=0,38$ ). The disease, the treatment and the painful medical procedures mostly influence their psychological condition.

The prevalence of psychological problems experienced ( $P=0,00001$ ) by children treated for cancer is statistically significantly different than that found in healthy children. Future research should give greater attention to other aspects of life of children treated for cancer and their parents.

