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Abstract

Paediatric Oncology has in fifty years developed from a fringe speciality of Paediatrics with very few surviving patients to a highly successful sub-speciality with the vast majority of patients surviving their disease and therapy. This has been achieved with highly intensive therapy with profound, sometimes devastating consequences for the patient and the family. Clinical epidemiology has been instrumental in this transition, making it possible to evaluate the therapy for the different subgroups of patients. Although palliative care in Paediatric Oncology is about relieving suffering in all phases of the disease, the aims must differ depending on the prospects for the patient. Understanding the clinical context, the treatment-goal for the individual patient and the prognosis is important when the palliation of the patient is managed. The improving results of the anticancer therapy has posed new challenges for the paediatric oncology team – when should the treatment-goals change from cure to pure palliation? When is experimental treatment a good option? Insights into the clinical epidemiology spectrum in Paediatric Oncology will help improve the palliative care for our patients.