

NZCCR REPORT 2018

The New Zealand Children's Cancer Registry (NZCCR) holds verified diagnostic, demographic and treatment information for children diagnosed with cancer since the year 2000.

The NZCCR Working Group, under the governance of the National Child Cancer Network, is responsible for monitoring the ongoing collection of registry data to support New Zealand childhood cancer research.

'SHARED CARE IS FAIR CARE'

You may have seen recent pieces in the media highlighting New Zealand's poorer cancer survival rates for some cancers when compared with countries such as Australia and Canada and regional inequalities in the delivery of cancer treatment and services (often referred to as 'the postcode lottery').

But do these statements hold true for childhood cancers, which account for less than one percent of new cancers diagnosed in New Zealand each year?

In 2018 the NZCCR Working Group conducted a comprehensive analysis of the NZCCR to determine if there was any evidence of the cancer survival inequalities that had been identified for our adult population. In addition to our usual groupings by cancer type, age, sex and ethnicity, we included comparisons by deprivation index, specialist centre, and whether the child received some of their cancer treatment at one of our 14 shared care centres.

We know that around half of the children diagnosed with cancer each year do not live in Auckland or Christchurch where our two specialist centres are located. We are pleased to report that our analysis showed that where a child usually resided had no bearing on the likelihood of them surviving their cancer diagnosis. Equivalent survival was found for those children living in Auckland or Christchurch compared to those living further away from the specialist centres. Those who lived in areas with high levels of deprivation had comparable survival to those living in the least deprived areas. And the survival rates for children referred to Starship Children's Hospital and Christchurch Hospital were identical.

Overall, New Zealand's child cancer five-year survival rate (84%) continues to be one of the best in the world - on a par with the rates reported by our benchmark countries of Australia and Canada.

The National Child Cancer Network's overarching objective is to ensure that all children receive the same high quality of cancer care regardless of who they are or where they live in New Zealand. Our results confirm that New Zealand's shared care model for child cancer services safely allows children to receive as much of their cancer treatment as close to home as possible without impacting on survival.

The results of our analysis were presented by Dr Jane Skeen at the International Society of Paediatric Oncology Society Annual Congress in Kyoto in November 2018 and by Dr Scott Macfarlane at the Cancer Care at a Crossroads Conference held in Wellington in Jan/Feb 2019. Copies of these presentations can be found on the NCCN website: www.childcancernetwork.org.nz

While the results of this analysis are pleasing, we also know that survival is one of many measures of health equity. The NZCCR collects additional data fields which may help us identify and address other potential child cancer inequalities. These include access to clinical trials, disease staging at diagnosis, and the rates of relapse and second malignancies. As we accumulate sufficient case numbers, we will be able to conduct further analyses and share our findings with you. In addition, the NZCCR will continue to support approved researchers with their own research questions to improve outcomes for children with cancer, many of which utilise our registry data in conjunction with other data sources such as patient medical records, laboratory test results, and family interviews.

We would like to thank our families for allowing us to collect information about their child's cancer and treatment which makes this vital research possible.

As always, if you have any questions about the registry or wish to find out more about how to request registry data, please don't hesitate to contact me at kirsten.ballantine@cdhb.health.nz

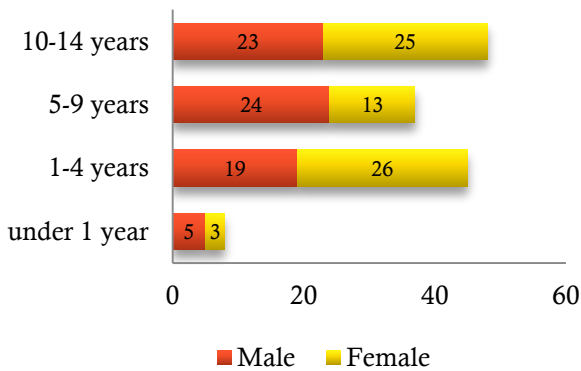
Kirsten Ballantine
NZCCR Manager / Analyst
on behalf of the NZCCR Working Group

NZCCR SNAPSHOT 2018

Note: this snapshot relates to New Zealand children aged 0-14 years newly *diagnosed with cancer* in 2018. It does not include patients referred to our paediatric oncology centres from overseas, those who are aged 15 years and over, or children who are diagnosed with a non-malignant/other haematological condition. As many childhood cancers require several years of treatment, the number of patients *undergoing treatment* each year is substantially higher.

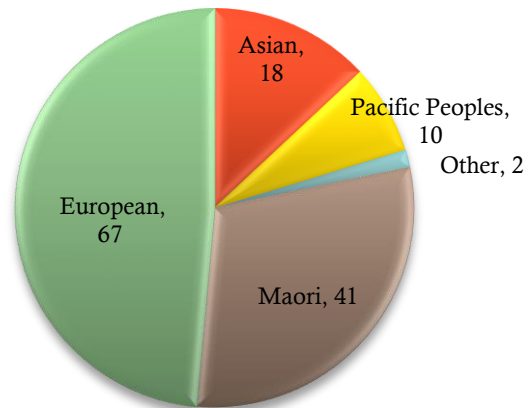
AGE AND GENDER

138 children were diagnosed with cancer in 2018. Compared to 2017 when half of the new cancer diagnoses were in children under five years old, this year the median age at diagnosis was close to seven years old and 35% of new patients were ten years or older.



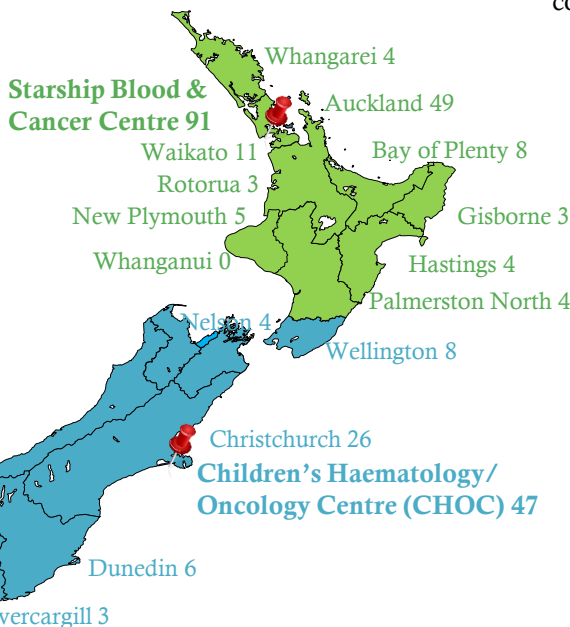
ETHNICITY

By prioritised ethnicity, 30% of children diagnosed in 2018 were Maori, 7% Pacific Peoples, 13% Asian, 1% African/Middle Eastern, and just under half (49%) identified solely as NZ / Other European.



RESIDENCE AT DIAGNOSIS

91 of the children diagnosed with cancer in 2018 resided in the geographical area covered by Starship Blood and Cancer Centre and 47 in the area covered by CHOC. 96 families (54%) usually resided in the Auckland and Canterbury regions with the remaining 46% of families travelling for at least some of their child's cancer treatment.



DIAGNOSTIC GROUP

The three major diagnostic groups of leukaemias, lymphomas and CNS tumours together accounted for 68% of all new childhood cancer diagnoses. Eligible children were enrolled in ten different clinical trials and a further five tumour biology studies which New Zealand has been able to access through our membership in international research consortiums.

