

Being a Volunteer for Children with Leukaemia

Leukaemia, also known as “blood cancer” among the public, is caused by uncontrolled proliferation of bone marrow cells. It can be deadly if not treated. It comprises %35 of all cancer cases in 2-10 years old cancer patients. It is caused by rapid reproduction of bone marrow cells. Excess bone marrow cells replace normal blood cells. Because of that leukaemia patients suffer blood loss and infection. Leukaemia can also spread to various parts of body. Causes of rapid reproduction of bone marrow cells are not known very well yet. But we know for sure that we must prevent children from interacting with carcinogens and also that the children should be fed organic and healthy food.

There are long-term treatments for leukaemia which involves chemotherapy and periodical chemical uptake. There is also another treatment called stem cell therapy. In today’s standards the chances that a patient will recover from Leukaemia are high, especially if said patient is diagnosed in early stages of cancer.

I am a volunteer of LOSEV (The Foundation of Healthcare and Education for Children with Leukaemia). This is a foundation that helps children with Leukaemia and their families. Their help extends from covering various expenses of said families to provide psychological support for children. They also own a hospital which is exclusive for child Leukaemia patients.

I couldn’t find a convenient community and volunteer activity in my school at the time. But I always wanted to do something for others. One day I decided to join LOSEV. I sent an e-mail to them, expressing that I would like to become a volunteer. They answered positively. So I had become a part of LOSEV.

The reason I chose LOSEV is an experience of my own. When I was 6 my family took me to hospital because I had been coughing intermittently. The doctor said them that I might have had Leukaemia. My family lived with doubt and fear for a week. At the end of that week It appeared that I didn’t have Leukaemia. I think this experience made me aware of such illnesses.

With a couple of other volunteer friends, we organized various events to introduce LOSEV to our school and to possibly recruit more volunteers. Although we weren’t quite successful, we had not lost our interest. We kept thinking about ways to inform people of LOSEV. As a volunteer we also had other tasks such as helping children with Leukaemia. Obviously we couldn’t help them in pecuniary means, as we were students who also needed money, so we had to devise our own ways to help them. This mostly included entertaining children and giving them small presents. The first time we did that was in New Year’s Day. This was the first time that I truly understood what they felt, that I truly empathize with them. We may have done something great that day, but I felt terrible. I had understood that I was too late to begin volunteering, that I should have started earlier. I felt terrible because I had not helped these children before that point in my life.

Unfortunately, Leukaemia can relapse. Meaning a patient could experience it again after recovering from it. It is also important to have great morale and motivation to fight this illness. The patients must be constantly treated both physically and mentally.

Each individual has a right to live. This is especially true with children. So we must be sensitive and helpful about such subjects. We should raise awareness of others. We should draw attention to the fact that such illnesses are easily treated especially if patients are diagnosed in early stages of cancer, that it has symptoms such as fever, weight loss, anaemia etc. That way maybe we could save or at least improve another child’s life.

If I put aside all I mentioned above and look from a general perspective; we, as pharmacists, have already volunteered to help save lives. Even during the pandemic, we are still working with heart and soul

so maybe one day we could help somebody. And I , as a pharmacist, am thankful to have a chance to change lives for better. I'm glad that I am a pharmacist.