

Survivorship Center - Research Update 2017

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National Leadership

The Cincinnati Children's Survivorship Center is one of the oldest and largest clinical care and research programs in the U.S. The Center currently follows approximately 1,800 patients, providing evaluation and care by a closely integrated team of specialists from diagnosis through adulthood. In addition to direct patient care, our center conducts research into new and better ways to ensure optimal health of cancer survivors.

Survivor Center Research Focuses on:

- The development of molecular markers to identify which patients are at high risk for late complications or secondary cancers
- Ways to improve quality of life and function in patients who have survived cancer
- The causes of early heart and lung disease in cancer survivors
- New approaches to ensuring reproductive health and improving fertility outcomes
- The evaluation and treatment of neurological and psychological side effects
- New ways to prevent secondary cancers and other complications associated with cancer treatment
- Early identification of late complications associated with cancer treatment

Research Update

Karen C. Burns, MD, MS, directs the Survivorship Center, a unique program that follows "children" many of whom are now well into adulthood. Dr. Burns studies long-term heart and lung health of cancer survivors. Her recent study of Hodgkin's lymphoma, which has an excellent cure rate in pediatric patients, showed that survivors are at an increased risk for cardiopulmonary complications due to chemotherapy. This research has highlighted the importance of monitoring heart and lung health of survivors. Dr. Burns also studies improvements in fertility preservation for patients who undergo chemotherapy and directs Cincinnati Children's fertility preservation program for children and adolescents undergoing chemotherapy.

Judy Correll, RN, APRN, helped to establish the survivorship center in 1988 and has been involved in issues of survivorship since that time. She has participated in numerous research projects concerning survivors of pediatric cancer. Her primary areas of research are post-traumatic stress and social, emotional, and behavioral functioning in survivors of pediatric cancer. She has also been instrumental in establishing the patient summaries and care plans provided to each patient at the end of their therapy, and during their transition to the Survivorship Center.

Stella M. Davies, MBBS, PhD, MRCP, serves on the national steering committee for the National Institutes of Health-funded Childhood Cancer Survivor Study. This study uses data from more than 14,000 childhood cancer survivors to understand genetic influences on the risk of cardiac side effects from treatment, the risk of obesity in leukemia survivors and the risk of second cancers in children treated with radiation therapy, as well as other issues.



Rajaram Nagarajan, MD, MS, is the director of the Cancer Control and Outcomes Research Initiative. His research interests include limb function and quality of life of survivors of pediatric lower extremity bone tumors. Dr. Nagarajan also studies the effects of anthracycline and radiation therapies on cancer survivors. While most survivors do not experience significant heart abnormalities, this research has shown that all survivors who received these therapies should be monitored, as some do develop serious complications.

Debra Kent RN, MSN, CPNP, has studied survivor health for more than twenty years in collaboration with researchers across the U.S. and Canada. Her cancer survivor research includes studies of adverse cardiovascular events after treatment and physical activity interventions. Her main research interests are patient/family education strategies for optimizing health and transition issues for survivors. Additionally, Debra and the team are working on an initiative to maximize uptake of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in cancer survivors because the HPV vaccine can prevent cancer.

Katherine Baum, PhD, leads a clinical collaborative group of pediatric neuropsychologists dedicated to optimizing services for survivors of childhood cancer. Her research has focused on how to define levels of neuropsychological services in oncology as a first step to developing evidence-based dynamic models of care.

Dennis D. Drotar, PhD, is identifying best methods to help families follow prescribed leukemia treatment regimens and manage treatment at home. He is also conducting studies to understand the factors that influence psychological outcomes of children and teens with chronic physical illness, including cancer.



Ahna Pai, PhD has been conducting research with childhood cancer survivors for over eight years. She is examining factors that influence personal and goal achievement in survivors of childhood cancer. The goal is to identify factors that will directly inform the development of interventions to support survivors in reaching the goals that they set for themselves.

Megan Elam, EdD, is the director of the new Center for School Services and Educational Research. She has invested her career in improving outcomes for students with a chronic medical condition. Currently, Dr. Elam is co-investigating an educational risk stratification tool in the oncology survivorship program with Christel Murphy, MEd. The primary purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of this assessment in accurately identifying a student's level of risk and need in education when a chronic medical condition is also present. Secondarily, results will be used to align education services provided to students with a chronic illness according to the level of risk assigned to each patient per results of the assessment.

Aimee Thompson, PsyD, has been involved in various survivorship research initiatives throughout her time as a psychologist in the CCHMC Survivorship Center. She co-leads the Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology task force and holds special interest in long-term socioemotional impact of oncology diagnosis and treatment, medical decision-making, and factors that impact medical adherence.

Rebecca Sisson, MS, LGC is a Certified Genetic Counselor II in the Division of Human Genetics. She has research interests in the identification of germline mutations on genomic tumor profiling and improving communication and barriers to care for individuals with cancer predisposition syndromes.