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How can we promote the quality of life of children who have survived cancer?

When children and adolescents are treated for cancer, over 75% of them are likely to achieve long-term remissions. They survive – but the question is, what is the **quality** of their survival? Our study of child and adolescent psycho-oncology () is designed to investigate the impact on child cancer-survivors' development of not only the disease itself but also the different kinds of treatment they may be given.

In particular, the study seeks to identify the main ways in which the quality of life of child cancer-survivors is affected, both in terms of objective indicators (such as mobility, sensory functioning and social integration) and subjective perceptions of wellbeing (such as emotional functioning and life satisfaction). We want to find out what is most destructive, and how it may be possible to ameliorate the impact.

Research on quality of life in child cancer survivors is currently facing methodological problems, and so the first part of the paper will focus on how to select an appropriate method for studying these questions. An important aim of the project is to establish a research methodology that will reflect the multidimensional nature of 'quality of life', and that will, in particular, enable us to identify changes in children's perceptions of quality of life as they grow up.

We hope our results will help to improve the treatment and services provided for such children, through informing health-care policy and practice. We also aspire to helping the parents of children who survive cancer. By giving them greater insight into their child's experiences and the problems they are likely to face, parents should be better able to look after their children in ways that enable them to flourish.

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