

What Causes Cancer in Children? Many Still Blame Bad Luck

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A team of researchers has thrown light on the community beliefs about what causes cancer in children, an area which remains understudied, finds a latest research.

"Few childhood cancers are attributed to genetics or environmental factors, so when children are diagnosed with cancer, families often wonder 'why me/why us'?", said lead author Janine Vetsch, postdoctoral research candidate from UNSW Sydney in Australia.

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Findings, published in *Acta Oncologica*, revealed that more than seven out of 10 childhood cancer survivors and survivors' parents believed that chance or bad luck caused the cancer.

This led to most parents and survivors feel that there is nothing they could have done to prevent the cancer, according to Vetsch.

However, around one in five families did believe that environmental factors and genetics played a role, despite only limited available scientific evidence, results further showed.

"It looks like healthcare professionals are successfully helping most families arrive at that view," said Vetsch.

Such views could lead to stigma. Hence, it is important to increase community knowledge of childhood cancer causes in general.

There is a need to encourage doctors to talk about the causes with affected families to address unhelpful misconceptions," Vetsch suggested.

- The Quint