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Project: *Social Information processing and it's relation to social adjustment in childhood survivors of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)*



Background

The most common childhood cancer is acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). ALL treatment differs from other pediatric cancer treatments because preventative treatment is required to stop leukemic cells from entering the central nervous system. Earlier, a treatment called cranial radiation therapy (CRT) served this purpose, but it has been found to cause serious issues in developing brains. Modern treatments have largely replaced CRT, but more research is needed

to define their full impact. These treatments have led to a substantial increase in the ALL survival rate, drawing attention to the long-term effects survivors face. Preliminary work suggests that 36% of survivors of ALL suffer from clinically significant difficulties in social adjustment, a key component of which is social information processing. Social information processing is the way in which social information is encoded in the brain, compared to other information, and later retrieved to play a role in social interactions. Social adjustment difficulties drastically increase the risk for mental and physical health disorders and poor health behaviours. Very little is known about the struggles in these areas faced by survivors of ALL who have undergone modern treatments rather than CRT. With this study, we aim to close this gap. We will assess survivors of pediatric ALL and, as controls, survivors of pediatric solid tumours. Each participant will visit a testing location where they and their caregivers will complete assessments of social information processing and social adjustment. Importantly, this study prioritizes patient-oriented research, meaning we will engage patients as partners,

focus on patient-identified priorities, and aim to improve patient outcomes using a pre-planned knowledge translation strategy.

