

Leucan sets forth the physical and psychological effects of childhood cancer

As part of International Childhood Cancer Day, Leucan sheds a light on the reality of childhood cancer survivors.

MONTREAL, February 15, 2022 – [Leucan](#) marks International Childhood Cancer Day by addressing a major aspect of the disease: life after cancer. While hundreds of lives are turned upside down by a childhood cancer diagnosis every year in Quebec, the physical and psychological effects of such a diagnosis remain widely unknown.

An increasingly greater number of children recover from cancer. That being said, 70% of them will develop sequelae arising from the disease or treatments. Out of that number, 50% will experience severe health issues.

Physical and psychological effects of childhood cancer

“At first, I was overwhelmed. It was hard to understand why this was happening to me, not to mention all the consequences of cancer,” explains Ruqaya, a young survivor. She was only 14 years old when the diagnosis fell: stage-four malignant brain tumour.

Cancer and its treatments often lead to various symptoms and side effects, and every patient will react differently. For Ruqaya, chemo and radiation therapy took a heavy toll. The young woman recalls feeling like she was slowly withering away.

“The constant appointments, vomiting, fainting spells; the stomach and heart aches; feeling unwell physically and psychologically—everything was so hard. I felt very much alone. Some friends left and never came back. I am finding joy again in the little moments. Hope comes from within but Leucan certainly contributed to sparking it,” she says.

Leucan provides services to others like Ruqaya to alleviate suffering during their hardship, leaving them free to focus all their energy on their recovery.

Life after cancer: learning to live with sequelae

Even after the end of treatments and when remission starts, consequences from cancer remain; some of them permanently. After an intensive treatment period, it is not uncommon for survivors to have significant functional limitations such as learning disabilities, trouble concentrating, language impairment, difficulties with social connections or relationships, and fatigue. Those issues can hinder their return to their day-to-day activities and to a better quality of life.

Ruqaya has been in remission for nearly two years but she is still coping with sequelae from treatments, including double vision and a strong feeling of loneliness and rejection.

“I had missed out on a whole year of school; a whole year of my life. Everyone else had moved on without me. I knew I had to persevere. Surviving cancer makes you grow up fast. I’ve been given a second chance at life and I’m seizing it with a brand-new determination,” Ruqaya shares.

Leucan: A reassuring presence throughout cancer and its effects.

For cancer survivors, like Ruqaya, life after cancer isn’t free of challenges. “It is a priority for Leucan to ensure a continued presence once treatments are over. Leucan provides tailored services to support its members, such as a financial assistance program for post-treatment sequelae as well as scholarships to encourage young people to pursue their post-secondary education; in fact, Ruqaya received one such scholarship,” explains Élodie Bergeron, Director, Family services, Research and Partnerships at Leucan.

To learn more about Leucan services, visit: www.leucan.qc.ca/en/impact

About Leucan

For more than 40 years, [Leucan](#) has been supporting cancer-stricken children and their families from the day of diagnosis through every stage of the disease and its side-effects. As a loyal ally of hundreds of families and thousands of members across Quebec, the Association provides [specific and personalized services](#) delivered by a qualified team with a cutting edge expertise. Leucan also [funds clinical research](#) and the [Leucan Information Centre](#). With its nine offices, Leucan is present throughout Quebec.

Source and information

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