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English News

01 TREATING BONE CANCER AT THE EARLY STAGE

JUL

KUBANG KERIAN, July 2016 - Cancer is a dreadful disease which might cause death, but can be treated in several ways such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery and taking medications.

The early detection of bone cancer is important for effective management and treatment. Treatment for bone cancer depends on the type of bone cancer one has, how far it has spread and his or her general health.

According to a lecturer and orthopedic surgeon (oncology), Orthopedic Department, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Professor Dr. Wan Faisham Nu'man Wan Ismail, based on the registry of cancer patients in Malaysia in 2003, there were about 21,464 newly diagnosed cancer patients and their number is expected to grow from year to year.

"Cancer is a disease caused by abnormal cells and mostly occurred when there are changes in genes that control cell division.

"There are two types of bone cancer. Primary bone cancer which is rarer begins in the bone, and it can strike any bone. The cancer initially forms in the cells of the bone while secondary bone cancer spreads to the bone after developing in another part of the body such as the prostate, breast, lung, kidney, colon and thyroid gland or from ionising radiation," he explained.

Wan Faisham, who is also the President of the Malaysian Orthopedic Association, said bone cancer is the most feared cancer because bone is the supportive structure in the human body that gives shape, support and protection to the body.

"The most effective treatment at the advanced stage is through surgery to prevent the cancer cells in the affected bone from spreading to other bones. Surgery involves removing the infected bone and the normal tissue surrounding it," he said.

He added: "The next stage involves replacing the removed bone with fiber bone to restore its function through a reconstructive process named Modular Oncology Endoprosthesis."

"Usually patients are not aware that they have bone cancer until symptoms such as swelling and pain is felt in the affected part of their bodies; hence it is known as a 'silent disease'.

"Other possible symptoms of bone cancer include severe pain especially at night, loss of function at affected part of the body, bones become more brittle and may break more easily, weight loss and lack of appetite," he said.

Wan Faisham advised the public to consult a doctor immediately if there are signs of cancer as early treatment can help prevent it from spreading to other parts of the body.

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