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Effect of *Phoenix dactylifera* palm fruit (Ajwa) on infection, hospitalization, mortality and quality of life among pediatric cancer patients at single Medical Institute in Saudi Arabia

Background: Recent studies showed that *Phoenix dactylifera* palm date have beneficial nutritional and medical values.

Objective: To determine the effect of regular intake of *Phoenix dactylifera* palm date on the occurrence of infections, hospitalization for fever and neutropenia, and mortality of pediatric cancer patients admitted to King Abdulaziz University Hospital, a tertiary care medical center, Faculty of Medicine, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A prospective cohort of 56 pediatric cancer patients attending King Abdulaziz University Hospital was enrolled from 2008 to 2015. The effect on quality of life of Ajwa intake with the standard regime of treatment was assessed (number of infections, hospital admissions, and off treatment and mortality) between patients receiving Ajwa supplement and patients not receiving Ajwa supplement. Information regarding demographic, clinicopathologic and treatment options were collected and controlled for accordingly.

Results: Twenty-three patients were on Ajwa and 33 were not on Ajwa. The supplementation of Ajwa significantly reduced hospital admissions (for fever and neutropenia) and infections ($P=0.009$ and $P<0.001$ respectively). Off-treatment didn't significantly differ between Ajwa and non-Ajwa groups. Ajwa group had a better survival in comparison to the non-Ajwa group (stratified log-rank $P=0.005$), where the main cause of death of patients on the non-Ajwa group was disease progression associated with infections (77%).

Conclusions: Regular intake of *Phoenix dactylifera* Ajwa supplement showed a significant improvement in the quality of life and mortality rate among pediatric cancer patients. Adding Ajwa to the standard treatment of pediatric cancer patients can improve their treatment outcome.

Biography

Soad K Al Jaouni is a Professor & Consultant of Hematology and Professor/Consultant of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, Senior Researcher at Hematology Department, Faculty of Medicine, King Abdulaziz University Hospital a tertiary care medical center, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. November 1989 had a certificate of The Royal College of Physician and Surgeon of Canada. Specialty Hematology, Toronto University, Canada. February 1990 and March 2006 had a Fellow Certificate of The Royal College of Physician and Surgeon of Canada. June 1990 had a Clinical Fellowship in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Sick Kid Hospital, Toronto University Canada. Maintenance Certificate 2005. Yearly participate in International & Local Conferences with more than 280 research and 86 publications. Dr. Jaouni is well known for her dedication active role in research on hereditary blood disease, cancer research and natural products research. Lately more interest in the quality of life and supportive care. She have an active role in public education to minimized and control inherited blood diseases, environmental pollution and cancer prevention.

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