Dear Editor,

It is easy to talk to a young child about leukemia if one has help. In Türkiye, Yaşar and colleagues [1] recently published in the Turkish Journal of Hematology a study of 100 children (and their parents) concerning the child’s leukemia diagnosis and found that 16 (16%) were not aware of their diagnosis but wished to have been [1]. I was very surprised to read that 13 (82%) of the 16 leukemia patients were young children (<7 years old). The stated reason for the nondisclosure of leukemia diagnosis to children was the doctor’s respect of the parents’ wishes to protect their children [1]. The literature also mentions that doctors believe that telling the child about the illness could hurt the family more than it helps [2].

As a physician myself, I understand this option, since delivering bad news is not an easy task, and comprehensive training in this aspect is often lacking within various clinical contexts [3]. Even so, by not being able to deliver bad news, physicians are hindering patients and their families from appropriately adapting to their medical circumstances [4,5]. The children’s necessity to receive leukemia information at the time of diagnosis (including the term leukemia, treatment, hospitalization, and its benefits and challenges) was also found in Japanese samples [5]. Interestingly, both the Japanese [5] and Turkish [1] studies also noted parents’ inclination to withhold information to safeguard their children, considering such a diagnosis could be overly upsetting [5].

Open dialogue might better contribute to the well-being of the child with cancer, as not disclosing the prognosis on its own does not necessarily ensure family stability [2]. Labeling a child's illness as cancer is crucial as it fosters trust, promotes involvement in medical discussions, reduces confusion, avoids outside sources revealing the diagnosis, and encourages better cooperation with tests and treatments [6]. Hence, how can parents receive guidance on discussing a leukemia diagnosis with a child under 7 years old? Traditionally, information resources such as websites from respected medical organizations (e.g., the American Society of Clinical Oncology's www.cancer.net) have
been employed to assist patients with cancer, families, and caregivers in understanding their medical situations. For instance, Cancer.Net offers guidance on addressing cancer with preschoolers [7]. Nowadays, the increasing availability of artificial intelligence chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT) is gaining significance in the medical domain [8], as they can aid in constructing responses to patient inquiries [9]. This provides parents with the opportunity to utilize such tools to facilitate improved communication with their children.

When ChatGPT-3.5 was asked to give an example of “what to tell a child of less than 7 years old and considering the diagnosis to be leukemia?” it provided the output depicted in Table 1.

By analyzing Table 1, it is evident that ChatGPT composed a text suitable for the child's age, providing clear explanations of leukemia in simple terms, and reassuring that the child will not be alone in the hospital. These are all crucial points for young children coping with cancer [6]. It is important to state that the text presented in Table 1 is only suitable to children above 3 years old since younger ones are not likely to understand cancer [6].

I believe that ChatGPT will not take the place of doctors, but it can be a helpful member of the healthcare team, collaborating with doctors to enhance parents' education and communication on sensitive topics, such as oncological pediatric diseases.

**Keywords:** Personal Communication, Medical Oncology, Leukemia, Child

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**References**

2. Rost M, Mihailov E. In the name of the family? Against parents' refusal to disclose prognostic information to children. Med Health Care Philos. 2021 Sep;24(3):421-432.
Table 1. ChatGPT-3.5 output when queried to give an example of “what to tell a child of less than 7 years old and considering the diagnosis to be leukemia?”

"Hi sweetie,
I want to talk to you about something important. You know how sometimes our bodies have little parts called cells that help us grow and stay healthy? Well, your body has some cells that are being a little bit different, and that's why you're not feeling quite right.
The doctors found out that you have something called 'leukemia.' It's like a special name for those tricky cells that need some help getting better. We're going to have a superhero team of doctors and nurses who will give you special medicine and treatments to make those tricky cells go away.
You might need to go to a special place called a hospital sometimes so that the doctors can take really good care of you. But guess what? I'll be right there with you the whole time, and we can bring your favorite toys and books to play with.
It's okay to feel a little tired or different during this time. Your body is working hard to feel better, and we'll do everything we can to help it. We'll have lots of hugs, kisses, and cuddles to make you feel better too.
Remember, you're not alone in this journey. Our family and friends love you so much, and we're all here to support you and help you get strong again. If you have any questions or if something doesn't feel right, you can always tell me. We're a team, and we'll go through this together, step by step.
You're such a brave and amazing little one, and I'm so proud of you. We'll take things one day at a time, and before you know it, you'll be feeling much better.
I love you more than you can imagine, and I'm here for you always."