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Children, when stricken by cancer, have nutritional problems caused by

- a) their socio-economic situation
- b) the disease itself, which causes loss of appetite and therefore a loss of weight, and
- c) the techniques used to diagnose (surgery) the disease and to treat it (such as chemo- or radiotherapy) which lead to further loss of appetite and the production of side-effects such as nausea or vomiting that worsen yet again the child's nutritional status.

Leukemia is the most frequent type of cancer found in children, accounting for between 35% & 40% of all cancers in children under 15. During treatment, children may suffer repeated infections that affect their immune system, and anaemia, caused by falling red blood cell production and a poor intake of iron, as well as prolonged bleeding when platelet count is low. This, plus all the above-mentioned problems, compounds the effects of malnutrition in these children.

Our children live in highly precarious socio-economic conditions: 90% of their families are very poor and can seldom afford the foods with the necessary nutrients, including vitamins and minerals, needed for their growth and development. Thus we believe that LLC and other nutritional supplements can have a positive effect on their full recovery.

An attempt to cure leukaemia and other cancers is something which children in developing countries, not only those in affluent countries, are entitled to expect. We believe that everything must be done to provide resources and make the necessary support available to cure an ever-increasing number of children, including the means to improve their nutritional status through strategies that facilitate food intake as well as providing easy-to-find, low-cost, nutritional supplements that have a positive impact on the children's nutritional status. In this respect, we believe that LLC can play a very important role because it can contribute to alleviating the anaemia usually caused by multiple deficiencies.

A small-scale study jointly conducted by SOYNICA and the Haematology & Oncology Dept found that patients receiving LLC, when compared with a similar group who did not have this supplement, saw a marked improvement in their haemoglobin indices and had a lower incidence of anaemia and gained weight.

Although LLC has other ingredients that could contribute to reducing the infection rate or improving patient response these were disregarded in this study; but it may be assumed that a patient enjoying better nutritional status and free of anaemia can withstand infection better and tolerate anti-cancer treatment more easily.

We therefore conclude that LLC should be made part of an appropriate strategy aimed at augmenting the recovery rate of leukaemia or cancer sufferers and improving the quality of life of the children. At the same time, other studies must be done to arrive at definite findings as to the impact of LLC on the nutritional status of children with leukaemia and other types of cancer and on morbidity and mortality rates.