The Recommendation of Disability Allowance for Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Patients

ACW Lee

Patients with disabling illnesses may be eligible for the Disability Allowance under the Social Security Allowance Scheme of the Social Welfare Department. The definition of severe disablement under the Scheme, however, is not directly applicable for the paediatric patient. A questionnaire survey was conducted to examine the recommendation made by paediatricians working in public hospitals on 19 pre-selected haematological and oncological disorders. The respondents consisted of paediatricians not specialised in haematology and oncology ("non-specialists") and paediatricians working in the field ("specialists"). Twenty-three (53%) of the 43 questionnaires distributed were returned. A consistent response in the recommendation of Disability Allowance was seen in 13 out of 19 conditions, in which over 80% of the respondents had the same reply. Discrepant responses were seen in the remaining conditions. Respondents also differed in their waiting period when discontinuing the recommendation after completion of anticancer chemotherapy. Discrepancies occurred not only between "specialists" and "non-specialists", but also among "specialists". Potential conflicts may arise when patients with the same medical condition are treated differently by different doctors, or from hospital to hospital. (HK J Paediatr (new series) 2001;6:116-120)

Key words: Decision making; Haematologic diseases; Oncology service; Social security