

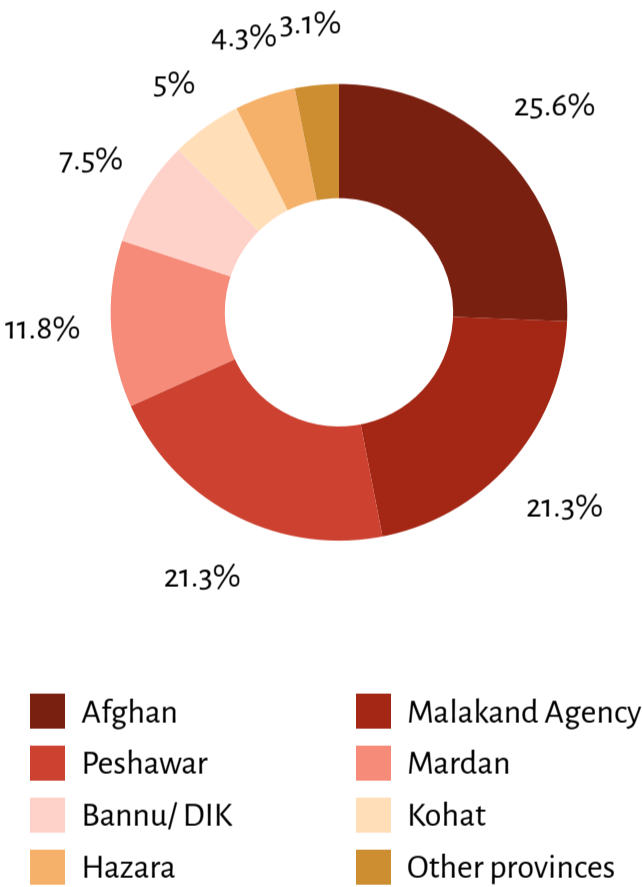
# Region-Wise Frequency of Pediatric Cancer in Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Center

## OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this study was to determine the regional distribution and frequency of pediatric cancers at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Center (SKMCH & RC).

## METHODS:

This retrospective study was conducted in the Pediatric Oncology Departments of SKMCH & RC, Lahore, and Peshawar. Children aged 1–18 years were included. Data were extracted from the Hospital Information System (HIS) from January 1, 2021, to June 30, 2021, without direct patient contact. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.



## RESULTS

A total of 160 pediatric patients were included. Of these, 56 (35.0%) were female and 104 (65.0%) were male. The largest proportion of patients were Afghan nationals (41 cases; 25.6%), followed by those from Malakand Agency (34 cases; 21.3%) and Peshawar (34 cases; 21.3%). Only 5 patients (3.1%) belonged to other provinces. Overall, 96.7% of the study population originated from Pakhtoon-dominated areas such as Afghanistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

The median age for diagnosis was 8 years. The largest age group was <5 years (94 patients; 58.8%), followed by 5–10 years (41 patients; 25.6%) and 11–18 years (25 patients; 15.6%). Among cancer types, Hodgkin lymphoma was most common (49 patients; 30.6%), followed by B-ALL (27 patients; 16.9%), non-Hodgkin lymphoma (25 patients; 15.6%), and bone sarcomas (15 patients; 9.4%). A majority of patients (95; 59.4%) were classified as high-risk, while 63 (39.4%) had low-risk disease.



## CONCLUSION

This study highlights a disproportionately high burden of pediatric cancer in Pakhtoon-dominated regions, particularly KPK and Afghanistan. Strengthening provincial-level cancer registry systems is essential for accurate epidemiological mapping. If future data confirm the higher prevalence of pediatric cancers in these areas, risk factors specific to Pakhtoon populations should be further explored and addressed. Additionally, pediatric oncology care in KPK must be expanded, as SKMCH & RC remains the primary center delivering specialized cancer care to children from both KPK and Afghanistan.