

# UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF 'KINDNESS' IN CANCER TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN



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## INTRODUCTION

Finding 'kinder' cancer treatments is the James Lind Alliance's Top Priority in children's cancer. The word 'kind' has been used to describe treatments in cancer for decades, but it means different things to patients, their families, and clinicians. This study investigated how published research defines 'kindness' in relation to cancer treatments.

## METHODS

This rapid review aimed to identify studies on 'kindness' in the cancer literature. A search strategy based on concepts of 'cancer' and 'kindness' was created. Searches were run in databases appropriate for a rapid review (including MEDLINE).

Studies describing instruments (e.g., self-reported or clinician/investigator assessed tools) that measured 'kindness' of treatments for individuals with cancer (adults and children) were included.

Title and abstract screening were completed in duplicate; full-text screening and data extraction were conducted by one reviewer. Study selection was iterative as there was a lack of data on 'kindness' scales, and in the end, focused on studies that described 'kind' treatments in cancer. Studies were summarised narratively and in tabular form.

## DISCUSSION

Kindness was used to describe treatments variably, and depended on the population of interest, highlighting the complexity in defining the phenomenon.

Future research should focus on what 'kind' cancer care means for families and clinicians and how this could be operationalised to create a tool to aid decision making for families of children with cancer.

## RESULTS

1485 studies were identified from database searches, 32 were eligible at title and abstract screening. No studies described instruments measuring 'kindness' of treatments. Henceforth, this review focused on how the academic community defined 'kindness'.

11 articles used the word 'kindness' to describe a cancer intervention in the Title and Abstract. 'Kindness' was used variably (see Figure below). Kindness was not contextualised in two studies. One study used 'kind' to describe treatments in children with cancer.

The use of 'kindness' was context dependent and varied based on the age of patients, and the cancer prognosis.

