

## **Project title: School reintegration of children treated for a brain tumour**

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**Introduction:** Childhood brain tumour survivors (CBTS) can experience negative changes after returning to school, for instance psychosocial problems and learning difficulties. Such consequences might disrupt CBTS' school careers, resulting in academic disadvantages compared to peers. A close monitoring by the environment - i.e. school staff, parents and healthcare providers - is crucial for remediation of problems in an early stage. In Belgium, there is a lack of clear guidelines on follow-up for stakeholders in education and healthcare. Additionally, little is known about how the reintegration process and subsequent development at school are perceived.

**Aims:** To gain insight into CBTS' school trajectories by exploring experiences, needs and expectations of the children and key figures, starting at the school re-entry. Also, we want to investigate communication and collaboration practices between the parents, teaching staff and healthcare providers. An examination of the perspectives of CBTS and those involved may lead to the development of guidelines for optimal follow-up.

**Methods:** A qualitative multiple case study is carried out, consisting of 5 CBTS between 6 and 12 years old who are followed for 2 years. Semi-structured interviews with the children, parents, teachers and healthcare providers are conducted several times. In addition, we consult medical records and school documents. To prepare and assist the data collection and analysis, a literature review was performed.

**Results:** Children were pleased to return to school despite being confronted with impairments. Parents acted proactively during reintegration when difficulties were observed or expected. Some of them monitored the school's activities because they questioned the support provided. Teachers found it difficult to estimate the children's functioning and to determine the best approach. Confirmation of their actions through interaction with colleagues or healthcare providers was considered beneficial. Communication and

collaboration were important to all involved, although little practiced. Some considered clarity about each other's views, expectations and responsibilities as crucial and stressed the need for coordination. Future perspectives included concerns about academic skills and provision of support, mostly in parents.

**Publications:** not yet available.