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IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME ON ACCESS TO TREATMENT IN PATIENTS WITH NEWLY DIAGNOSED LEUKEMIA: A REAL-WORLD ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Blood cancers (Leukemia, Lymphoma, and Multiple Myeloma) account for 8.2% of all newly diagnosed cancers in India, with leukemia being the most common.¹ The trend showed a steady increase over the past two decades. Projections suggest that the burden of leukemia will significantly increase by 2050 in our country.² While recent advances have improved survival rates, access to therapy remains the most significant challenge for leukemia treatment in developing countries, primarily due to high cost.^{3,4} In response to this challenge, the government has introduced a universal health insurance scheme to provide free treatment for all diseases, including leukemia, for all deserving people.

Methods

This retrospective cohort study includes newly diagnosed patients with Leukemia (Acute Lymphoblastic leukemia, Acute Myeloid Leukemia, Chronic Myeloid Leukemia and Chronic Lymphocytic leukemia) who received at least one cycle of treatment under Government health insurance between January 2023 and December 2023. Data regarding insurance and treatment details were collected from case records.

Health scheme: Rajiv Aarogyasri Health scheme, Employment Health Scheme, Central Government Health Scheme, Road Transport Corporation

Results

During this period, 2911 patients visited our outpatient department, and 1787 (61.3%) were registered. Among the registered, 459 (25.6%) had blood cancer (code 7-13) with leukemia [215 (46.8%)] being the most common, followed by Lymphoma [147(32%)]. Of the leukemia patients, 162 (75%) were newly diagnosed, and acute leukemia was the most common subtype, accounting for 108 (67%). Government health insurance was utilised by 105 (64.8%) patients, with the highest utilisation among acute leukaemia patients, 95 (88%).

Conclusion

In our study, we found that there is improved access to treatment for patients with leukaemia, particularly in acute leukemia where the cost of treatment is significantly high. This highlights the significance of governments' cancer policies in enhancing access to leukemia care. However, further improvements can be made by increasing public awareness of the available health insurance programmes.

References

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Acknowledgement and contact

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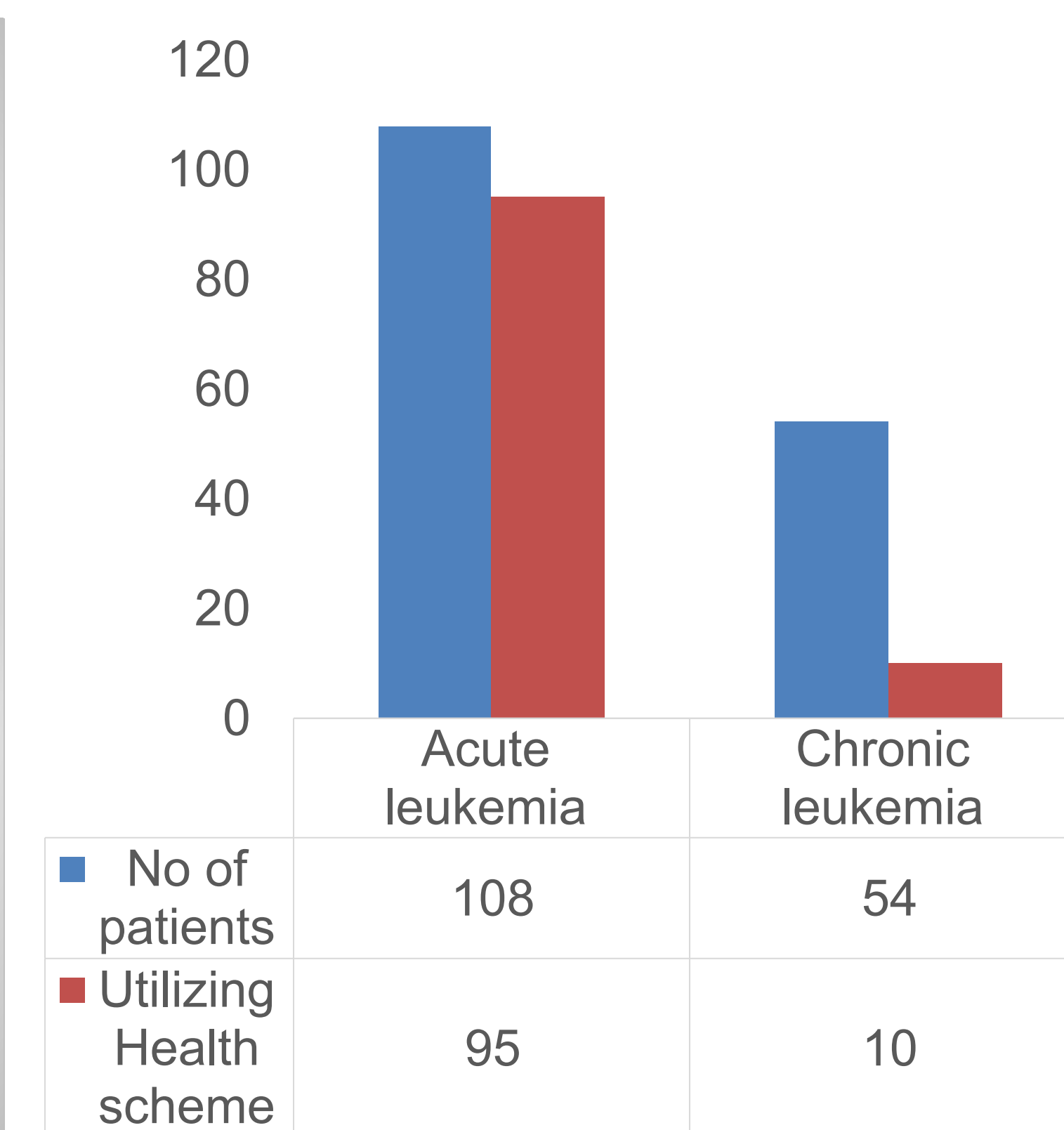
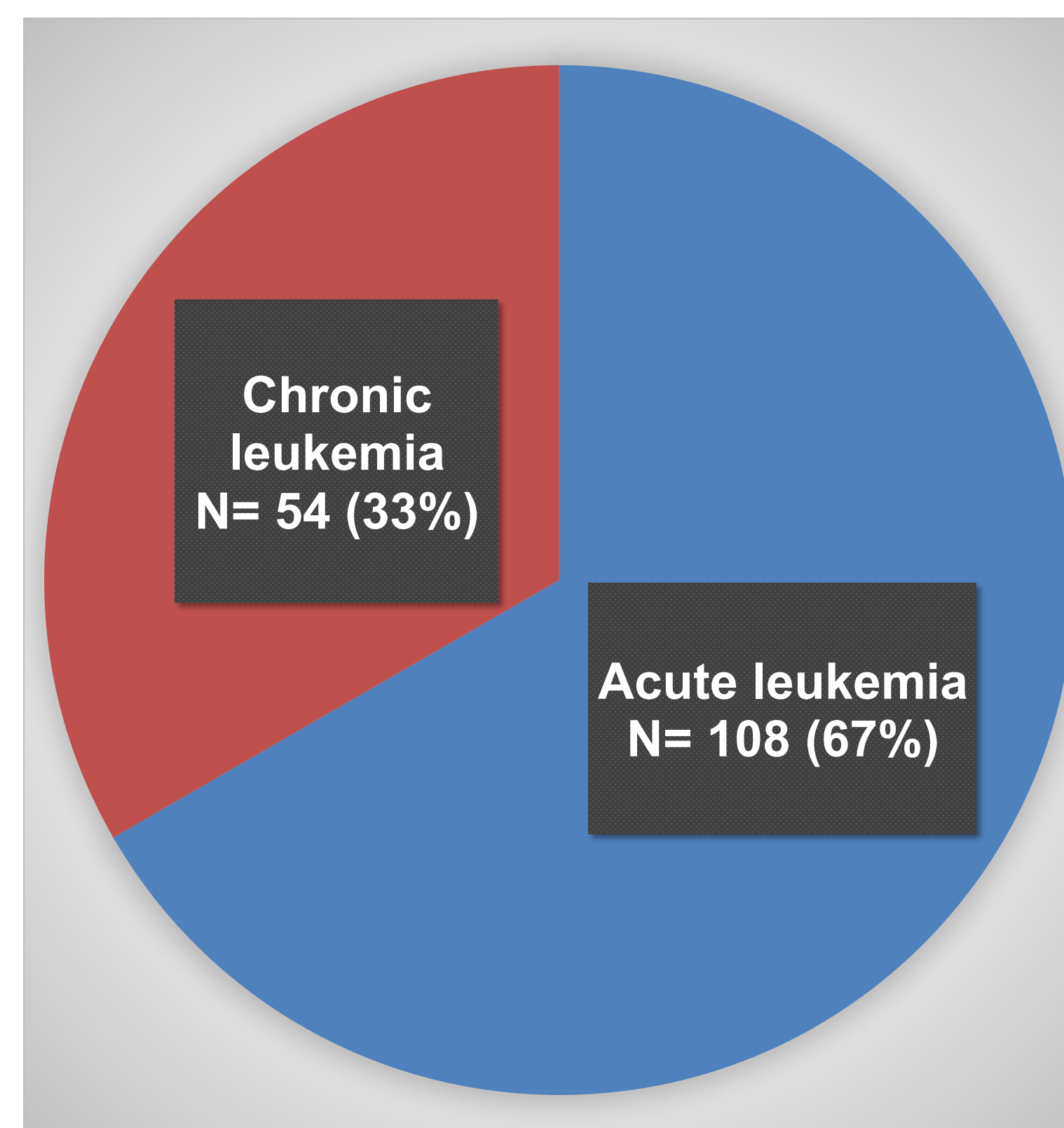
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