

SYMPTOMS OF PRIMARY BONE CANCERS & TUMOURS

BY ANATOMICAL SITES

Chondrosarcoma and chordoma are slow growing tumours. Because their location is close to major nerves, tumours can press on these nerves, causing nerve-based symptoms.

Most common misdiagnoses: Sporting injuries / pulled muscles and sciatica. In younger patients growing pains and scoliosis.

VERTEBRAL COLUMN

4% of all cases

Chondrosarcoma, Ewing sarcoma & chordoma. More common in adults.

Most common symptoms: Bone pain, often NOT at the site of the tumour, loss of strength in limbs, stiffness and issues with balance, numbness in limbs and fatigue.

Less common symptoms: Limp or issues walking, weight loss.

Patients, particularly those with Ewing sarcoma, experience mild symptoms at first, that build up over weeks, or they may appear suddenly. Some patients report symptoms that disappear for relatively long periods, before suddenly returning.

Most common misdiagnoses: Sporting injury / pulled muscles. In younger patients growing pains or chest infections / asthma

RIBS

9% of all cases

Ewing sarcoma, chondrosarcoma and chordoma. More common in adults and TYAs.

Most common symptoms: Bone pain, which can occur away from the site of the tumour and fatigue.

Less common symptoms: Stiffness / reduced movement & headaches.

Although osteosarcomas can occur in almost every bone in the body, the largest percentage affect the lower limbs. Adamantinomas occur mostly in the lower leg bones. Many children and teenagers and young adults are diagnosed with tumours in the lower limbs.

Most common misdiagnoses: Nerve damage and sporting injuries / pulled muscles. In younger patients growing pains. Arthritis in older patients.

LOWER LIMBS

34% of all cases

Ewing sarcoma, chondrosarcoma, osteosarcoma, adamantinoma. More common in children and TYAs, but significant in adults.

Most common symptoms: Bone pain, which is particularly worse at night, often intermittent and intensifies with time. Stiffness and a limp or inability to walk and fatigue, a palpable or visible lump.

Less common symptoms: Bone fractures, weight loss, muscle wasting and headaches.

BONE CANCER AWARENESS INITIATIVE

SAVING LIVES THROUGH EARLIER DIAGNOSIS

A BONE CANCER RESEARCH TRUST & CHILDREN WITH CANCER UK PROJECT

HEAD

14% of all cases

More common in adults

Skull: Chondrosarcoma, chordoma and Ewing sarcoma

Most common Symptoms:

Headaches / migraines and eye problems

Less common symptoms:

Issues with balance, bone pain.

Jaw: Osteosarcoma & Ewing sarcoma.

Most common symptoms:

Toothache and headaches. A lump can often be seen / felt.

Less common symptoms:

Bone pain, fatigue, weight loss.

Tumours in the skull and jaw often present symptoms that are non-specific and can mimic those of more common conditions.

Most common misdiagnoses for tumours in the skull: Migraines and eye sight issues.

Most common misdiagnoses for tumours in the jaw: An abscess or cyst on the jaw.

UPPER LIMBS

17% of all cases

Ewing sarcoma, chondrosarcoma, osteosarcoma. More common in children and TYAs, but significant in adults.

Most common symptoms:

Bone pain, which is particularly worse at night, often intermittent and intensifies with time. Stiffness, bone fractures and fatigue, a palpable or visible lump.

Less common symptoms:

Weight loss, fever, bruising easily and headaches.

Although the presence of a lump is a common symptom, some patients with tumours in the upper limbs do not report the presence of a lump.

Most common misdiagnoses: Sporting injuries / pulled muscles and tendinitis.

In younger patients growing pains. Arthritis in older patients.

PELVIC BONES

18% of all cases

Ewing sarcoma, chondrosarcoma and osteosarcoma. More common in adults.

Most common symptoms:

Bone pain, often radiating down legs or up the back. Stiffness and a limp or inability to walk and fatigue.

Less common symptoms:

A palpable or visible lump.

Although pelvic tumours are more common in adults, a significant number of teenagers and young adults present with Ewing sarcoma in the pelvic bones. Some chondrosarcomas are painless and only manifest through a fracture where the bone has been weakened by the tumour.

Most common misdiagnoses: Nerve damage and sporting injuries / pulled muscles. In younger patients growing pains.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
BCRT.ORG.UK/AWARENESS
OR CALL 0800 111 4855**

Sources: Bone Cancer Research Trust website; Oxford handbook of clinical specialties, UK guidelines for the management of bone sarcomas (2016, C. Gerrand et al). Charity details: Bone Cancer Research Trust charity no 1159590, Children with Cancer UK charity no 298405.

Poster Anatomical Sites V1 2020