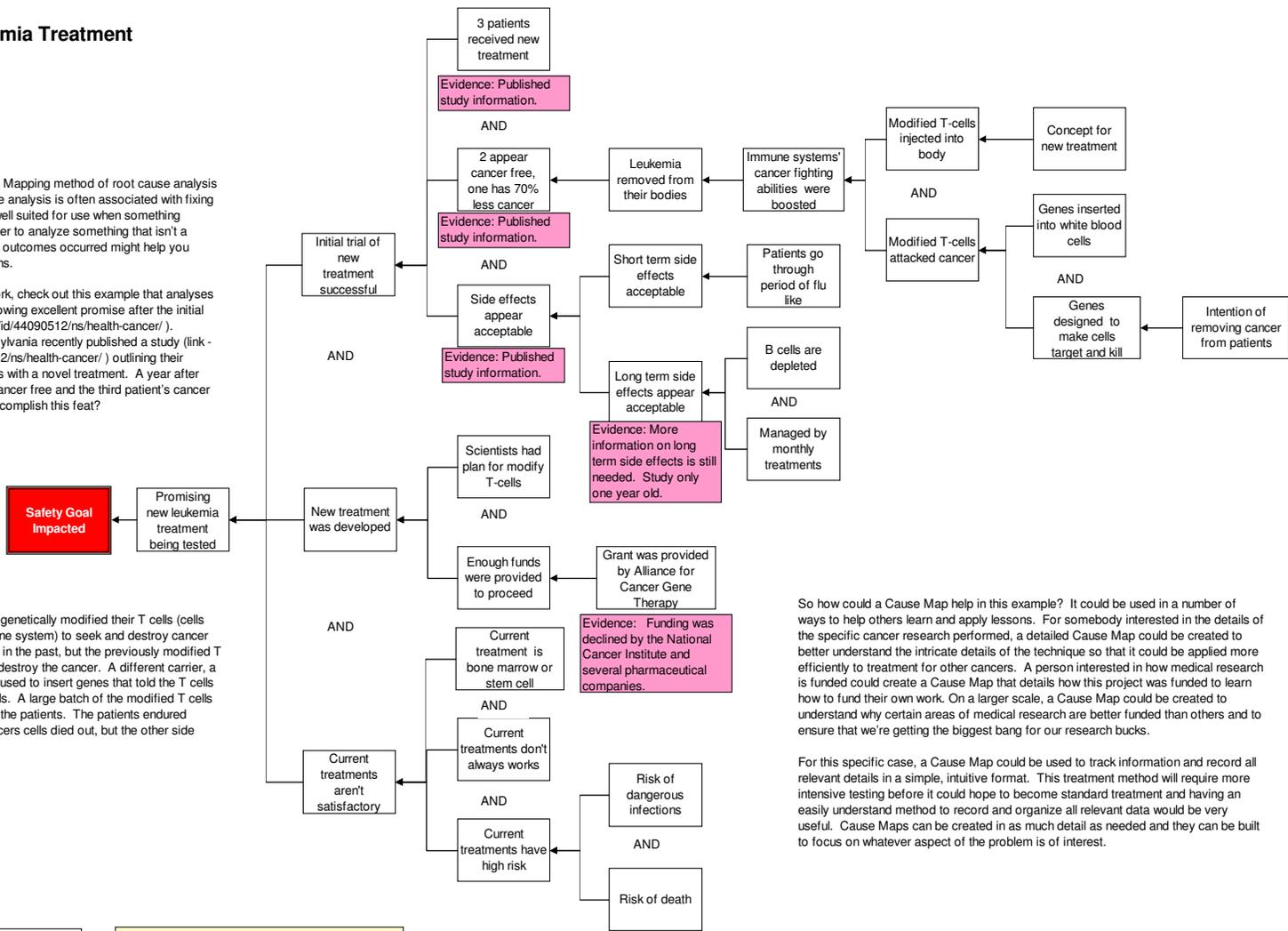


Promising New Leukemia Treatment

University of Pennsylvania, USA
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One of the best things about the Cause Mapping method of root cause analysis is its flexibility. For instance, root cause analysis is often associated with fixing problems, but Cause Mapping is also well suited for use when something positive happens. Why would you bother to analyze something that isn't a "problem"? Understanding why positive outcomes occurred might help you reproduce the success in other situations.

To better understand how this might work, check out this example that analyses a new treatment for leukemia that is showing excellent promise after the initial trials (link - <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44090512/ns/health-cancer/>). Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania recently published a study (link - <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44090512/ns/health-cancer/>) outlining their success treating three leukemia patients with a novel treatment. A year after treatment, two of the patients appear cancer free and the third patient's cancer was reduced by 70%. How did they accomplish this feat?



They drew blood from the patients and genetically modified their T cells (cells that normally serve as part of the immune system) to seek and destroy cancer cells. Similar concepts have been tried in the past, but the previously modified T cells died out before they were able to destroy the cancer. A different carrier, a harmless version of the HIV virus, was used to insert genes that told the T cells to multiple rapidly and target cancer cells. A large batch of the modified T cells were grown and then injected back into the patients. The patients endured intense flu-like symptoms while the cancers cells died out, but the other side effects have been minimal so far.

So how could a Cause Map help in this example? It could be used in a number of ways to help others learn and apply lessons. For somebody interested in the details of the specific cancer research performed, a detailed Cause Map could be created to better understand the intricate details of the technique so that it could be applied more efficiently to treatment for other cancers. A person interested in how medical research is funded could create a Cause Map that details how this project was funded to learn how to fund their own work. On a larger scale, a Cause Map could be created to understand why certain areas of medical research are better funded than others and to ensure that we're getting the biggest bang for our research bucks.

For this specific case, a Cause Map could be used to track information and record all relevant details in a simple, intuitive format. This treatment method will require more intensive testing before it could hope to become standard treatment and having an easily understand method to record and organize all relevant data would be very useful. Cause Maps can be created in as much detail as needed and they can be built to focus on whatever aspect of the problem is of interest.

Cause Map High Level



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