

“Global Cancer Organisations commit to getting the message on signs and symptoms of childhood cancer out into the community” on International Childhood Cancer Day

Geneva | 15th February 2013 – Today, on International Childhood Cancer Day, the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) and Union for International Cancer Control commit to disseminating information on signs and symptoms of childhood cancer to health professionals and community healthcare workers .

There are many types of cancer in children but childhood cancer is a rare disease and 70% of childhood cancer cases are curable. Despite this, each year, more than 175,000 children across the world are diagnosed with cancer, and about 90,000 die from the disease. Prompt diagnosis and effective treatment is the key to offering the more children and their families a chance of cure.

SIOP President Gabriele Calaminus explains “parents and carers often report that they knew that their child’s symptoms such as fatigue or persistent headaches were something more serious, although their doctor diagnosed a common childhood ailment. It is imperative that healthcare professionals are well informed about the signs and symptoms so that they exclude the possibility of cancer early and avoid contributing to delayed presentation of childhood cancer at treating centres”.

Global statistics expose a shocking disparity - in developed countries, around 70% of children with cancer survive, but in low resource settings this figure falls to 20% or even 10% in the world's poorest countries says Professor Kutluk President-Elect of UICC and a paediatric oncologist in Ankara Turkey. Getting the message about leading signs and symptoms of childhood cancers down to the community level health care providers where it is difficult to gain access to information through other channels will be the key to improving early diagnosis, prompt referral and saving lives here too.

On international Childhood Cancer Day UICC and SIOP commit to escalating dissemination of information on childhood cancer signs and symptoms through their member networks of cancer control organisations and childhood cancer professionals for local impact. In addition, UICC commits to working with the My Child Matters partnership of over 40 projects in 26 countries to develop campaigns at country level, the newly announced My Child Matters awards focus on regional collaboration and network building, which will provide ideal platforms for this outreach work continues professor Kutluk.

Signs and Symptoms of Childhood Cancer

The acronym CHILD CANCER provides a good mnemonic for recalling the signs and symptoms of childhood cancer. A UICC resource provides details and links to key additional resources.

About the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP)

Established in 1969, the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), with over 1500 members, is the lead organization concerned with the issues of children and young people who have cancer. The society envisions that “no child should die of cancer.” To realize this vision, SIOP’s mission are to: (1) ensure that each child and young adult with cancer has access to state-of-the-art treatment and care; (2) ensure that all involved in childhood cancer worldwide, have access to the latest progress through meetings, networking, and continuing professional development; (3) support those caring for children and young adults with cancer to provide the best curative and palliative therapies; and, (4) advocate for appropriate long-term follow-up for children and young adults after treatment for cancer. Dr. Gabrielle Calaminus is the president of SIOP. SIOP is governed by a board of directors and has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. www.siop.nl

About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

UICC is the leading international non-governmental organisation dedicated to the prevention and control of cancer worldwide. It is the largest cancer-fighting organisation of its kind, with over 760 member organisations across 155 countries representing the world’s major cancer societies, ministries of health, research institutes, treatment centres and patient groups.

UICC is dedicated to continuing to work with world leaders to increase their support for cancer control measures, and hold them to account for the cancer commitments made in the UN Political Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs).

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