

IAEA expands capacity building to combat childhood cancer

A new partnership will enable the IAEA to better help low and middle-income countries provide increased access to early detection and treatment of paediatric cancer. Under the cooperation agreement with Childhood Cancer International (CCI), signed in early June 2018, CCI and the IAEA will work together to provide specialized training for professionals working in paediatrics, increase awareness and mobilize resources to benefit children with cancer in IAEA Member States.

CCI brings together 188 organizations in 93 countries representing parents and young cancer survivors and works to promote best practices, develop effective, innovative approaches and deliver cost-effective solutions to reduce deaths from childhood cancer. It implements projects in several countries, including Ethiopia, Ghana and Myanmar, to address the healthcare needs of children under treatment, to train fellows in paediatric oncology, to build sustainably run facilities and to establish parent support groups.

Over 300 000 cases of cancer are diagnosed annually in children under the age of 14, and the number of cases is on the rise. A 2015 CONCORD-2 Lancet reportⁱ estimated that child survival in less developed parts of the world can be as low as 30%, compared with above 80% in high-income countries.

Increasing access to treatment

“This arrangement establishes a collaboration in the fight against paediatric cancer that will increase access to radiotherapy services for children with cancer in developing countries,” said Dazhu Yang, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation. “This partnership will further support our Member States as they respond to the increasing demands for cancer services and specialized skills.”

The IAEA has been working closely with Member States to devise and implement programmes which include radiation medicine as part of a

multidisciplinary approach to fighting cancer, from prevention and early detection to treatment. In addition to training health professionals, the Agency contributes to quality control measures and to the procurement of equipment for treating paediatric cancers through the transfer of advanced technologies such as proton therapy. It develops guidelines for the safety and protection of patients, including children, who receive radiation.

Thanks to the IAEA’s involvement in cancer diagnosis and treatment globally, CCI expects the partnership to bring benefits to young patients and their families worldwide, said Ruth Hoffman, President of CCI. “Our goal is for all children and adolescents with cancer to receive the best possible level of care and have access to diagnostic services,” she said. “We can achieve this goal with the help of the IAEA.”

— By James Howlett

Online game application wins IAEA student competition



The Malaysian student team presenting their winning entry at the IAEA student competition on innovative approaches to popularizing nuclear science and technology, 31 May 2018, Gyeongju, South Korea.

(Photo: IAEA)

With a computer game application to promote nuclear science, a secondary school team from Malaysia won the international student competition whose winners were announced at the IAEA’s Third International Conference on Human Resource Development for Nuclear Power Programmes in Gyeongju, South Korea, in May 2018.

The team from SMK Kuala Besut secondary school named their app “100 Things about Nuclear Science and Life”. After launching the educational tool in early 2018, the students found that participating locals and tourists had drastically changed their views about the nuclear industry.

“Before the project, 93% of participants expressed a negative attitude towards