

SOCIÉTÉ INTERNATIONALE  
D'ONCOLOGIE PÉDIATRIQUE



Curing paediatric cancer in Africa

## Global 'Gold September' Campaign to Raise Awareness of Childhood Cancer



This campaign is a time to recognize the children and adolescents affected by cancer at global and African scale. During September, and throughout the year, we honour the children and young people fighting cancer, the families who care for them, the healthcare professionals and their caregivers, the survivors, the children who lost their lives, and the scientists dedicated to beating childhood cancer.

The Gold Ribbon is the universal symbol to create awareness of childhood cancer – literally, to 'shine the light' on these young patients and their specific and often unmet care and research needs. The Gold September campaign has been initiated by parents, patients, and survivors directly affected by childhood cancer and have become a broadly endorsed initiative with global presence.

# The burden of Childhood Cancer in Africa

It was estimated that there were 397 000 new cases of childhood cancer worldwide in 2015, with 146 000 cases in Africa. However, only 224 000 were diagnosed, suggesting that 43% (172 000 of 397 000) of childhood cancer cases were undiagnosed globally, with substantial variation by region, ranging from 3% in western Europe (120 of 4300) and North America (300 of 10 900) to 57% (43 000 of 76 000) in western Africa.

Many types of paediatric cancer can be treated with generic medicines and regimens that are readily adapted to resource-limited settings. These include Burkitt lymphoma, Wilms tumor, acute lymphoblastic leukemia, Hodgkin lymphoma and retinoblastoma. About 50% of all cancers in the 0 to 19-year age group would be in this 'favourable prognosis' category if diagnosed early and treated appropriately.

Unfortunately, treatment failure is common in LMICs, including all African countries, because of many factors, including

- Failure to diagnose or misdiagnosis,
- Delayed presentation or diagnosis,
- Unaffordable or abandoned treatment,
- Treatment-related death,
- Drug shortages and use of poor quality medicines
- Lack of consistent adherence to treatment,
- Use of reduced intensity treatment regimens to facilitate tolerability may also contribute to treatment failure and excess relapse.

Many causes of treatment failure are preventable. In order to overcome this global challenge, it is essential that African countries adopt a comprehensive paediatric cancer control strategy through continental and international collaboration.

The international Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), as the global professional body uniting all types of health care professionals involved in childhood cancer care, training and research, has committed expertise and resources to improving care and survival for children and adolescents with cancer in Africa for many years.

## **Priorities for Childhood Cancer in Africa**

- 1. Access to appropriate and affordable medicines and devices are made available to treat young patients with cancer.**
- 2. Access to centers where children and adolescents with cancer can be treated with dignity to the best possible medical standard.**
- 3. Commitment to ensuring the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer aim of reaching at least a 60% survival rate for children in Africa is realised.**
- 4. Establishing national childhood cancer registries to ensure accurate data collection to facilitate planning of childhood cancer services.**
- 5. Training primary healthcare workers to recognise signs of childhood cancer and refer appropriately.**
- 6. Access to oral Morphine Sulphate solution which is safe, effective, affordable and essential for providing comfort to children with incurable cancer.**
- 7. Training healthcare workers in the tenets of palliative medicine to ensure that all forms of suffering are alleviated for patients with cancer and their families.**
- 8. Establishing research programs to ensure that standards of care for young people with cancer are improved and are documented.**
- 9. Improve the quality of survivorship.**
- 10. Achieving comprehensive and affordable cancer care through communities, industry and relevant stakeholders collaboration.**

**Celebrate the children and young people battling cancer, the families who care for them, the healthcare professionals and their caregivers, the survivors and the children who lost their lives.**

## Show your commitment to children with cancer by:

- Lighting iconic buildings, historic landmarks, monuments, bridges, and natural environments in Gold
- Decorating these landmarks with Gold Ribbons
- Wearing Gold Ribbon pins at public and media engagements
- Other activities marked with the Gold Ribbon and Gold Light symbols



The International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) is the only global multidisciplinary society entirely devoted to paediatric and adolescent cancer. The society has over 1800 members worldwide including doctors, nurses, other health-care professionals, scientists, and researchers. Our members are dedicated to increasing knowledge about all aspects of childhood cancer. **SIOP's vision is that no child should die of cancer and that cure can be achieved with no or minimal late effects.**



The Africa Society for Paediatric Oncology (SIOP Africa) is a continental branch of SIOP and a leading organisation in Africa working to ensure a brighter future to children with cancer. Its mission for the next decade is to increase the cure rate and the quality of lives of children with cancer as well as survivors across Africa



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