

Cured of Childhood Cancer – What's next?

A project funded by Gert and Susanna Mayer Foundation

Long-term follow-up care for childhood cancer survivors is one of the most important challenges in cancer medicine care. Because of the possible late effects of the treatment, which can still occur decades after diagnosis, a special aftercare structure must be created for the long-term childhood cancer survivors and due to different health care systems in each country special structures are needed. The Gert and Susanna Mayer Foundation (based in Wuppertal, Germany) is funding an innovative project that will help to set up appropriate structures.

Late effects can affect different organs and range from mild impairments to life-threatening complications and diseases. However, many of the former patients do not know that they are at risk of developing long-term consequences. In addition, knowledge of the topic has only emerged within the past 20 years. Thus the issue is important for a target group who were childhood cancer patients until the mid-1990s because they do not know about their risk for late effects.

Due to the steadily increasing number of survivors of childhood cancer, the long-term follow-up care of these people is a very important component in children's oncology care. However, there are still no nationwide offers in Germany for the long-term aftercare of childhood cancer survivors. That is why Gert and Susanna Mayer Foundation will be funding an innovative project in 2020: Establishing, evaluating and implementing aftercare structures for long-term childhood cancer survivors who are adults now. For the future it is planned to involve eight university hospitals across Germany. Study center is located at University Medical Center Schleswig-Holstein, Campus Luebeck. Study chair is Prof Thorsten Langer from the German childhood cancer late effects research group (Late effects surveillance system). From the Mayer Foundation's home region pediatric oncology departments in Bonn and Essen are involved in the project. First the pilot period will be funded. The aim of the project is to identify secondary diseases as early as possible in order to be able to treat them in the best way.

