Dear all,

In previous issues of our newsletter, we have addressed how nurses faced the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, we want to turn our attention to other crisis situations globally. The theme of this year's newsletter is Pediatric Oncology Nurses: Leading Through Crisis.

The increasing frequency of global natural disasters as a result of climate change has created catastrophic conditions around the world. Many of us have been impacted by hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires, typhoons, tornadoes, extreme heat, and other natural disasters. Others have faced political and economic upheaval, as well as food insecurity. Most recently, the war in Ukraine and ensuing refugee crisis has had a global impact, affecting the care of pediatric oncology patients in the region.

It is important that pediatric oncology nurses recognize how we can prepare for, deal with and recover from these catastrophic events. We want to acknowledge our nursing colleagues who tell their stories of how they have confronted, managed and evolved as leaders during challenging situations.

Linda Abramovitz
Liz Sniderman
(Co-editors)
Dear fellow Pediatric Oncology nurses,

We write this message in eager anticipation of our first in-person gathering as a group in 3 years. The 2022 SIOP Congress will be filled with long overdue opportunities to see old colleagues, network with new acquaintances, and catch-up with dear friends. After being physically distant for so many years, we will surely not take the opportunity to unite for granted.

Although we have not been together since 2019, the work of our working group and its members has not slowed! Throughout the pandemic, nurses shared their stories of responding to the public health crisis while also ensuring our most vulnerable patients are cared for on pediatric oncology wards around the world. At this year's Congress, we look forward to hearing the latest research and evidence-based practice improvements that our members have been working on even while facing the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

During the Congress, we will hold a SIOP Global Health Network Nursing working group meeting to discuss upcoming priorities, seek input for educational sessions for the upcoming year, as well as announce the rotation of the co-chairs. Join us to learn more or get involved further in our working group!

Don't forget to join us on social media and via WhatsApp, where you will hear of upcoming meetings, opportunities, and celebrations of each other's successes.

Facebook: SIOP Global Health Network: Nursing Working Group
Twitter: @SIOPGHNursing
WhatsApp: (join via QR code)

Liz Sniderman and Shenila Anwarali
SIOP Global Health Network
Nursing Working Group Co-chairs
When major events occur in the world, pediatric oncology patients, families, and the professionals who care from them are also affected. Pediatric oncology nurses are often at the front lines, ensuring care continues even during the most unusual of circumstances. Read stories from Poland, the USA, Indonesia, and Lebanon of how nurses took the lead during crises.

**Unicorn Clinic: The most magical place in the world**

Zuzanna Cepowska and Katarzyna Matczak Łódź, Poland

It was a regular Tuesday day shift on my Pediatric Oncology and Hematology unit. I was just in the middle of my paperwork, when one of my colleagues from work approached me: "You know, there is this thing going on. Prof Mlynarski organizes it – they rescue Ukrainian children with cancer and apparently, they need nurses. Especially Oncology and Hematology nurses. You are the perfect fit!"

I went to Prof. Mlynarski, the chief of the clinic and asked him all about it.

Yes, they did needed nurses to help during the upcoming weekend and it had to be a quick decision. But it was not a difficult one. I already knew what had to be done. I called my friend Kasia – she worked at the Pediatric ICU and asked her if she was interested as well. That was only a formality.

We started preparing ourselves with no idea what to expect, so we were preparing for everything. We bought new scrubs, we approached a foundation that we knew, to make a donation for children, and we bought STICKERS. Loads of colorful stickers. This is the most important tool while dealing with children for any nurse, we assumed.

On Saturday morning we were already on the way. It was a three-hour drive, to a place in the middle of the forest. When we arrived, it looked just like any other Polish retreat building, but everyone was getting ready. Nurses, MDs, translators, firefighters, scouts, and a lot of other volunteers who were there to help in every possible way.

We were introduced to the staff, a group of people from Ukrainian, Polish and American side. They explained us the plan for the night, showed us around the building, and gathered everyone to sync up with the plan for the upcoming convoy.
We called our supervisors to explain the situation. We made it to stay a bit longer, and eventually we were chosen to become chief nurses. We implemented all the ideas for the next convoy and structured the workflow. Eventually it was possible for us to be delegated and we officially started working at the Unicorn Clinic.

As chief nurses, we were responsible for scheduling nurses’ shifts, training of newcomers, making sure all the supplies are there, coordinating the work of everyone during the convoys, organizing medical support during the transport to their final treatment destinations and obviously taking care of patients.

Being there did not only mean caring for them medically. Bearing in mind they were not only patients, but war refugees too, we tried to create a safe space for patients and their family members. We bought decorations and set up the nursing station so it looked kid-friendly. We organized movie nights, singing nights, birthdays and many more little events for those who would pass through our facility. It was hard not to get attached, even though they would only spend a few days in our clinic. After all, they were all waiting to be transported for treatment outside of Poland, whose medical capacity was already stretched to the maximum. But seeing all those people getting onboard, with hope on their faces, was always the greatest prize for what we had been doing.

The weekend turned into one month, one month into three months and eventually, we stayed to the very end and are still working in the Unicorn clinic, the most magical place in the world.

They were supposed to arrive at 9pm at the train station. One part of our team was there to wait for them, together with dozens of fire brigades and police. We rehearsed everything, but it was hard to predict what was going to happen when you waited for over 150 people with their ill children just escaping from war.

They were late, very late. At the end they came around 2:00 AM and the whole place just started moving. Or at least it looked like it. Our goal was to examine patients in the fastest possible way, assign them to the rooms, and let them rest after a warm supper. The kids were half asleep and anxious, so the stickers turned out to be icebreakers! It took us more than two hours to help everyone.

Afterwards, we had a post-convoy meeting where we spoke about our experiences, feedback and what we could have done better. Even though it was already 5:00 AM, we could not sleep; the adrenaline was still keeping us up. There was a lot to improve, and this is when we started to show how nurses work. They loved our ideas, we were all getting along, after all, we were bonded by a noble cause. We all made a great team, and it was hard to leave just after the weekend.

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Hurricane Sandy
Rachel Glincher
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
New York, United States

It is hard to believe that Hurricane Sandy ravaged through the Northeast 10 years ago. In many ways, it feels like forever and in many ways, it was just yesterday.

At the time of the hurricane, I was working as a pediatric nurse at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY. New York is not typically a hurricane zone. As the news came of the upcoming storm, people's thoughts wavered between dismissive and fearful. We weren't sure exactly what was to come. New York City announced stopping public transportation prior to the storm. I wasn't scheduled to work the following day, but living a bridge away from the hospital, I decided to go to the hospital before the storm. I was grateful to have no children at home or any dependents relying on me.

As a new nurse, the experience was exhilarating in some ways. I was excited to be there to help. I went into this profession to serve, and here was a time when I was truly needed. It was scary as well. The winds were fierce, and the rains were strong. Luckily, in our neighborhood, we didn’t have the worst of it. Watching the news was the most frightening part. Seeing hospitals evacuating was frightening, not knowing exactly when the worst part of the storm would hit us.

It was nearly impossible to sleep when not working. It was an experience that united staff together, so many emotions, everyone wanting to help as much as possible. Furthermore, it also united us to our patients. We were all in this together. Everyone prayed for the best, scared of what was to come. It was also a learning curve. A patient with severe hemorrhagic cystitis treated at a different cancer center came to us for an admission because he couldn’t travel to his usual hospital. I had to learn how to treat and care for a condition I hadn’t seen before. I was also learning all about the patient and family, who were scared to be treated at a new facility. Over the few days that I was confined to the walls of the hospital due to the lack of transportation I laughed a lot, I loved a lot, I learned a lot. I was grateful every moment that we were safe and surrounded by so many hardworking, caring people.

“...it was an experience that united staff together, so many emotions, everyone wanting to help as much as possible. Furthermore, it also united us to our patients. We were all in this together.”
RAIN, FLOOD AND DUTY

Noor Siti Noviani Indah Sari
Rumah Sakit Kanker Dharmais | Jakarta, Indonesia

"It's okay, Dian. There's no need to be afraid. It's just a storm that comes from the sky. See... it's starting to rain slowly?", said Citra to her friend. "We have to hurry because we will be late. Yes, we are facing heavy rain and floods on the road. But our friends have been waiting for us to hand over shifts and the patients also need us".

After several hours of breaking through hard rain and floods, Citra and Dian finally arrived at the Hospital. The illustration of Citra and Dian is a picture of nurses who have experience with climate change. They both work in the same place as pediatric nurses in the oncology ward. Patients and their parents also have the impact of climate change.

Indonesia has two climates or seasons, the rainy season and the summer or dry season. Usually from October to February is the rainy season, and from March to August is the summer or dry season. In the rainy season, it often rains heavily. Rain is more frequent and the amount of water in rivers or water reservoirs is increases. Therefore, the risk of flooding, landslides and various diseases due to weather changes is very high.

Floods in urban areas and others have an impact on cancer treatment services for children. Access to the hospital is not easy, due to flooding and rain. It took a lot of time and money to get to the hospital. Accommodation that cannot be used by all pediatric patients personally. Some pediatric patients have had to delay treatment because of these limitations. Not only patients, the nurses on duty also encountered problems related to flooding and rain. Sometimes, some nursing staff have to replace friends who cannot work because their houses are flooded or access to hospitals is difficult.

Due to climate change issues, many nurses work closely with several volunteers. They help patients to provide accommodation that helps bring children to the hospital during control, or treatment time. In addition, shelter is also provided for patients who are far from home, at a very low cost or free of charge.

The most important thing is to maintain the balance of nature and the cleanliness of the environment so that flooding does not become an obstacle to the continuity of treatment for children with cancer and nurses to care for them.
I woke up as usual and get ready to go to my work and meet the little warriors who provided me with a daily dose of strengths and courage. You might wonder and ask yourself who these warriors are. These are special children with supernatural and magical influence on everyone they meet. These are the children who have cancer and blood disorders. These kids come daily to receive from us nurses the necessary treatment to help them overcome their disease and lessen their pain. In return, they fill our hearts with joy and teach us important lessons on a daily basis.

However, on this day, I wasn’t able to reach my work. All the roads were closed, and a revolutionary movement had begun. At the beginning, I saw the end of corruption that have infected our country for years and thought that finally, we will have a new life full of dignity in our own beloved country. Unfortunately, it was just the beginning of a devastating economic and financial crisis in a country where we haven’t recovered post 25 years of war yet.

Suddenly, we were out of cash source, out of bread and out of fuel, and almost out of the basic needs of living. Every vital sector in the country was affected by this revolution, even healthcare. The damage was of high impact, resulting in a massive immigration of elite teams of nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals in a search for new opportunities and stable life. Thus, the hospitals suffered an unexpected shortage of personnel, requiring immediate change in the workflows to be able to continue their mission in providing safe and quality care for the community.

This economic and financial crisis extended its trails and without mercy it worsened the suffering of a population that was already suffering a distressing illness: the pediatric oncology patients. At the beginning of the revolution, the road closure by the rebels and the great traffic jam that developed as a result of it, created a large obstacle for these patients hindering them from arriving to the treatment centers; thus an unnecessary delay in the treatment plan was imposed on this patient population.
However, this was just a small problem in comparison to the new problems that cascaded as a result of the political upheavals and financial crisis. Suddenly, the country had no power supply to provide electricity that is necessary for living in acceptable conditions, especially during winter. Furthermore, drugs disappeared from the shelves and patients weren’t able to find required medications. Even if a drug was available, the prices became extremely expensive that made it more difficult for certain patients to have access to medical care. Not to mention, compromised food and water safety due to the lack of monitoring and control from the government.

In addition to the political upheaval, economic and financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown with curfew created an additional source of concern and sometimes caused treatment delays. The Lebanese people in general and the pediatric oncology population specifically shifted to survival mode and started trying to find new ways to adapt with these hard circumstances.

As a nurse, I also had my share of being stuck on the road for hours, struggling to reach my workplace. The roads weren’t safe at all. The rebels used to burn tires, and sometimes they attacked drivers who tried to pass. Unluckily, some days were worse than others and being able to reach work was an impossible mission. Similarly, reaching home from work was sometimes impossible, so I always kept a bag ready with me in case I had to stay outside home.

As a nurse, I have a mission to provide care for our patient population. These patients highly depended on us and we cannot leave them. On some days, I used to reach to the work area hours before my shift start just to ensure that I arrived to work. Many of my colleagues did the same. On other days, my colleagues and I had to stay hours after the shift was over to complete patients’ treatment, since they couldn’t arrive at an earlier time of the day.

Being a pediatric hematology oncology nurse is an honor to me. Once, I had a patient who drew a picture of a tree with roots and a girl watering it. She dedicated this drawing to me saying: “I am the tree with the roots and the girl represents you, my nurse, who is taking care of me to help me become better”. How can I forget such words coming from a little warrior? It is because of her and many other warriors like her that kept me going to work amidst all these unbearable circumstances and risks. The pediatric oncology population is special and caring for such patients requires a high level of dedication and sacrifice because they deserve the best of the best.
ABOUT THE CONGRESS

Experience 4 outstanding days of cutting-edge science, engaging debates and networking with world renowned experts at SIOP 2022! Advance your paediatric oncology career, connect with like-minded people and contribute to a world where no child should die of cancer!

VIEW THE PROGRAMME:

https://siop-congress.org/programme/

REGISTER TODAY!!

https://siop-congress.org/register/
Do you have a presentation at SIOP Congress?

Check out the recording of the "Effective Presentation Skills for Healthcare Professionals" session!

Find this, along with other Global Health Network sessions, SIOP Congress highlights, and more videos on the SIOP YouTube channel!
Every year on September 8, we celebrate international Pediatric Oncology Nurses Day. The SIOP Global Health Network Nursing Working Group has created a poster to recognize the contribution of nurses in supporting patients' journeys.

This poster is available to download in 12 languages on the SIOP Website: https://siop-online.org/int-paediatric-oncology-nurse-day/
Follow these steps to join the SIOP Global Health Network, working groups, and other networks:

**STEP 1**
- Go to www.siop-online.org

**STEP 2**
- Go to "My SIOP" under the membership menu and log in with your SIOP credentials.
- If you have forgotten your SIOP login and password, please email membership@siop-online.org to reset your password. You can list down your achievements here.

**STEP 3**
- Once logged in, scroll down and you will see "Update my Profile" section
- You will be asked to enter your SIOP credentials one more time.

**STEP 4**
- Once you are logged in, you will see your Profile Information.
- Scroll down and you will see a menu with all the program activities within SIOP. Please select your programs of interest.
- After you have made your selection, please click on "Submit" to save the changes.
How to join the 2022 Gold September campaign?

Show your support towards Childhood Cancer awareness by sharing a photo on your social media with our #GoldSeptember frame. We will create collages of pictures of all our members, to show that together we are strong and we can make a change.

**STEP 1:** On any web browser go to [https://www.twibbonize.com/goldseptember](https://www.twibbonize.com/goldseptember)

**STEP 2:** Upload a photo from your phone or computer.

**STEP 3:** Download the photo with the frame.

**STEP 4:** Share the photo on any social media using the hashtags #GoldSeptember and #SupportKidsWithCancer

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CONTACT US!