

## Towards quality, comprehensiveness and excellence. The accreditation project of the Organisation of European Cancer Institutes (OECI)

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### ABSTRACT

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There are important gaps in the health status of citizens across Europe, as measured by life expectancy, mortality or morbidity data (Report for the European Commission on the health status of the European Union, 2003). Among the main determinants of the major causes of mortality and morbidity, stated in this report, stands recurrently access to quality healthcare. There is a fundamental need to define quality indicators and set minimal levels of performance quality criteria for healthcare. There is a need to integrate research into healthcare and to provide patients with equity of access to such high quality care. Oncology is a speciality particularly suited to experimenting a first application of accreditation at European level. The Organisation of European Cancer Institutes is a growing network of cancer Centres in Europe. The focus of the OECI is to work with professionals and organisations with regard to prevention, care, research, development, patient's role and education. In order to fulfil its mission, the OECI initiated in 2002 an accreditation project with three objectives:

- to develop a comprehensive accreditation system for oncology care, taking into account prevention, care, research, education and networking.
- to set an updated database of cancer centres in Europe, with exhaustive information on their resources and activities (in care, research, education and management)
- to develop a global labelling tool dedicated to comprehensive cancer centres in Europe, designating the various types of cancer structures, and the comprehensive cancer centres of reference and Excellence.

An accreditation tool has been established, defining standards and criteria for prevention, care, research, education and follow-up activities. A quantitative database of cancer centres is integrated in the tool, with a questionnaire, that provides an overall view of the oncological landscape in OECI cancer centres in Europe. Data on infrastructures, resources and activities have been collected. This OECI accreditation tool will be launched in autumn 2008 for all cancer centres in Europe. It serves as a basis for the development of the labelling tool for cancer structures in Europe, with a focus on Comprehensiveness and Excellence labels. Quality assessment and improvement is a critical need in Europe and is addressed by the OECI for cancer care in Europe. Accreditation is a well accepted process and is feasible. Standards and criteria as well as an accreditation tool have been developed. The OECI questionnaire gives an accurate vision of cancer institutions throughout Europe, helping assessing the needs and providing standards. The accreditation project is a long-term complete and voluntary process with external and internal added value, an active process of sharing information and experience that should help the whole cancer community reach comprehensiveness and excellence.

**Key words:** cancer centre, quality of care, assessment, labelling, accreditation, organisation of care, integration, comprehensiveness.

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For more information please visit [www.oeci.org](http://www.oeci.org)

For a demonstration of the e-Tool: [www.oeci.selfassessment.nu](http://www.oeci.selfassessment.nu) (username and password oeci)

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