

## The Youth Project at the Istituto Nazionale Tumori in Milan

Andrea Ferrari<sup>1</sup>, Carlo Alfredo Clerici<sup>1,2</sup>, Michela Casanova<sup>1</sup>, Roberto Luksch<sup>1</sup>, Monica Terenziani<sup>1</sup>, Filippo Spreafico<sup>1</sup>, Daniela Polastri<sup>1</sup>, Cristina Meazza<sup>1</sup>, Laura Veneroni<sup>1,2</sup>, Serena Catania<sup>1</sup>, Elisabetta Schiavello<sup>1</sup>, Veronica Biassoni<sup>1</sup>, Marta Podda<sup>1</sup>, and Maura Massimino<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pediatric Oncology Unit, Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale Tumori, Milan; <sup>2</sup>Faculty of School of Medicine, Department of Biomolecular Sciences and Biotechnology, Psychology Section, University of Milan, Milan, Italy

---

### ABSTRACT

---

The paper describes the key issues of the Youth Project launched in 2011 at the pediatric oncology unit of the Istituto Nazionale Tumori in Milan dedicated to adolescents (over 15 years old) and young adults (up to 25 years old) with solid tumors. The Youth Project was developed within the pediatric oncology unit in the conviction that adolescent patients may benefit from the multidisciplinary team typical of the pediatric oncology setting, as well as the expertise in treating pediatric-type malignancies and enrolling patients in clinical trials. The project was an offshoot of existing activities, making no major changes to the hospital's organization and posing no major demands on the institution's administration and board. Patients are managed by the pediatric oncology staff, but they have access to particular services (e.g., regarding their psychosocial support, fertility preserving measures, access to care after completing therapy); dedicated, adequately equipped multifunctional rooms have been provided. The location of the pediatric unit within a cancer referral center and the cooperation with divisions dedicated to adults have played an important role in the project's creation.

---

**Key words:** adolescents, adolescents with cancer, young adults, pediatric oncology, psychosocial support, youth project, access to care.

*Acknowledgments:* The authors would like to thank the Associazione Bianca Garavaglia and the Near/Magica Cleme Foundation for supporting the Youth Project at the pediatric oncology unit at the Istituto Nazionale Tumori in Milan. Chiara Secco is acknowledged for the figures.

*None of the authors have any conflicts of interest or competing financial interests to declare.*

*Correspondence to:* Andrea Ferrari, MD, Pediatric Oncology Unit, Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale Tumori, Via G Venezian 1, 20133 Milan, Italy.  
Tel +39-02-23902588;  
fax +39-02-23902648;  
email  
andrea.ferrari@istitutotumori.mi.it

Received September 19, 2011;  
accepted October 19, 2011.