

**Cancer Information Has *One* Number:  
25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cancer Information Service**

**Twenty-five years ago, the Cancer Information Service (Krebsinformationsdienst, KID) was launched at the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum). Cancer patients, their families and other interested members of the public seek information here about all aspects of cancer – free of charge, independent, scientifically well-founded and up-to-date. For many people who have questions about cancer, the Cancer Information Service has become a guide through today’s information jungle. The service helps to evaluate information according to one’s own individual situation – by telephone, e-mail and the Internet.**

Started in 1986 as a telephone service operated by a few volunteers, the Cancer Information Service has long since evolved into a multimedia information service addressing many different target groups. As early as 1999, the Cancer Information Service added a comprehensive Internet presence to its service spectrum. Since 2001, it has been possible to send inquiries by e-mail. Finally, since 2006, cancer information has had *one* number: At the toll-free number 0800 420 30 40 the service is available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

“Establishing KID was a brilliant idea which was ahead of its time in Germany,” said Professor Dr. Otmar D. Wiestler, DKFZ’s Scientific Director, honoring the pioneering work of the service’s initiators: Hilke Stamatiadis Smidt, then DKFZ’s press officer; psychologist Dr. Almuth Sellschopp, and Professor Dr. Harald zur Hausen, then Scientific Director of DKFZ.

The KID team individually answered 32,774 inquiries in the past year, as Dr. Regine Hagmann, head of the Cancer Information Service, reported. In addition, its Internet pages were accessed more than 70 million times. This illustrates the enormous need for high-quality and independent cancer information in Germany. The type of questions has changed over the decades, Hagmann says: “In the beginning, the main concern of users was to seek first information. Today, we often help them assess the value and quality of vast information they already have and to evaluate its relevance for the individual situation. The wish for a trustful conversation is still a major concern of callers, even though more and more people use our Internet pages to seek information about cancer.”

Up until 2009, the German Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Baden-Wuerttemberg funded the Cancer Information Service as a temporary project. Since then, the service has received institutional funding by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and has been expanded into a national reference center for cancer information. “Thanks to long-term, secured financing, KID is always available now. In the past, callers often did not get past the busy tone. Today we can offer enough lines to serve the demand,” Regine Hagmann says, pleased about this. In 2010, the Cancer Information Service additionally established an outstation at the University Cancer Center (UCC) in Dresden, which is currently staffed with five female doctors, to expand its services.

As a National Center for Cancer Information, the Cancer Information Service has increased international networking with similar information services in other countries. The service also maintains close national contacts, such as with German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe), the Independent Patient Counseling Service Germany (UPD) and cancer self-help organizations.

The KID team has already started putting further plans into practice: A separate information service for medical professionals is in preparation. Furthermore, staff members are developing information in simple language tailored to the needs of people who currently have insufficient access to cancer information due to their life or educational situation.

Otmar Wiestler expects that the importance of the Cancer Information Service will continue to increase. "Advances in research and medicine have turned cancer more and more into a treatable, chronic disease. This means that patients have a great need for independent information according to the best available evidence over a prolonged period of time. The Cancer Information Service KID, based at the German Cancer Research Center with its excellent research background, is an ideal companion for these people."

Cancer information has one number:  
Cancer information via e-mail:  
Cancer information on the Internet:

0800 420 30 40  
[krebsinformationsdienst@dkfz.de](mailto:krebsinformationsdienst@dkfz.de)  
[www.krebsinformationsdienst.de](http://www.krebsinformationsdienst.de)

*Dear readers in the editorial offices,*

*In the coming days (April, 14, 15 and 18) we will provide you with more information about the work of the Cancer Information Service: What do women ask, what do men ask? How have questions about breast cancer changed since KID was founded? Why is independent information particularly important as a decision aid in prostate cancer? How to prevent? This is the most frequent question of people who are themselves not affected by cancer.*

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ), employing over 2,500 staff members, is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. More than 1,000 scientists are working to investigate the mechanisms of cancer development, identify cancer risk factors and develop new strategies for better cancer prevention, more precise diagnosis and effective treatment of cancer patients. In addition, the staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) provides information about this widespread disease for patients, their families, and the general public. DKFZ is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (90%) and the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg (10%) and is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers.

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