

## **Changes brought about by cancer Researchers study how cancer impacts our quality of life**

**A diagnosis of cancer instantly changes the lives of those affected. It causes anxiety and insecurity regarding treatments, their side effects, and the future in general. But how much does a person's quality of life really deteriorate? Scientists from the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) in Heidelberg are now studying this question. In the "LinDe" study, they are asking more than 10,000 healthy and sick people about their quality of life. German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe) is providing €356.000 to help fund the study.**

"'LinDe' is an abbreviation for 'Quality of Life in Germany,'" explains Dr. Volker Arndt from the Division of Clinical Epidemiology and Aging Research. "The data collected in this study will help us answer a number of important questions: How do Germans rate their quality of life? What factors influence their ratings? How do chronic diseases such as cancer affect quality of life over the long term?"

The LinDe study is based on 10,000 questionnaires that are being sent to male and female German residents who have been selected randomly from registration offices throughout the country. Study participants are questioned on topics such as their quality of life, their physical activity and social environment.

The study places a particular focus on tumor diseases. "A cancer diagnosis is a dramatic experience for those affected," says Arndt. "The disease and any therapy it involves, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, can lead to various physical, psychological and social problems. These problems may also have severe adverse effects on the quality of life of patients, even many years after therapy."

"Our aim is to identify adverse effects on quality of life caused by cancer and to study ways by which they can be avoided." Improving medical and psychosocial care for cancer patients is one such endeavor.

### **Background information: Cancer in Germany**

The Robert Koch Institute estimates that at present more than 490,000 people are newly diagnosed with cancer each year in Germany. The number of cases is rising – by 2050 it may have increased by a third. The reason lies with increases in life expectancy. The older people get, the less reliably cellular repair mechanisms work. The health care system is facing enormous challenges. German Cancer Aid is facing this challenge: It supports the interests of those affected, offers help and advice for cancer patients and their families, and is committed to improving the prevention and early detection of cancer.

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 2,500 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment of cancer patients more successful. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg, where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. In the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK), one of six German Centers for Health Research, DKFZ maintains translational centers at seven university partnering sites. Combining excellent university hospitals with high-profile research at a Helmholtz Center is an important contribution to improving the chances of cancer patients. DKFZ is a member of

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