

No. 47

November 21, 2016 (ah)

30 Years of the Cancer Information Service: More important than ever before!

Every year, more and more people are afflicted by cancer. In 2015 there were about 490,000 new cases in Germany alone. So, it is not surprising that the need for reliable information continues to grow: Last year, the German Cancer Information Service (KID) of the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) responded to 34,000 individual enquiries from all across Germany – more than ever before. Every month between 450,000 and 635,000 users accessed information on the website www.krebsinformationsdienst.de. Since 2014, doctors, caregivers, therapists and psychological counselors have utilized and valued the professional service krebsinformationsdienst.med.

What patients ask

The questions have not changed much since 1986: Most patients and their loved ones ask about current cancer treatment options and are looking for concrete therapy and support services. The most common forms of cancer are usually the most asked about: breast cancer for women, prostate cancer for men. Other questions answered via phone or email include how to cope with cancer on a day to day basis, how to deal with potential side effects of treatment, or how safe and effective alternative treatment methods are. Nearly 70 doctors and other staff members work at the KID. In order to ensure that all inquiries are answered based on hard evidence, the KID employees research, evaluate, and document the current medical standards and the newest scientific data. For over 30 years the KID has therefore built a unique scientific database, which guarantees that patients receive reliable information that is always up to date with the most current medical research.

Known all over Germany

Though initially known mainly in Germany's western and southern regions, the Cancer Information Service is increasingly used by people across the entire country. This is due in part to the opening of our Dresden branch in 2010. "In addition to that, we also managed to raise awareness for our services in the north and east of Germany in 2015 via a targeted ad campaign," explains Susanne Weg-Remers, the director of the KID. "It's important to us that all those seeking advice always know who they can turn to in order to receive independent and reliable information."

The KID online

Though it started out purely as a phone service 30 years ago, the KID's webpages have since become a mainstay of its services. Recognizing that many people, especially in medical matters, inform themselves online first, the KID ensures that the information they receive is kept to a consistently high standard. The user numbers of www.krebsinformationsdienst.de have been growing steadily over the past years as well. Those visiting the site seek advice regarding cancer risks and prevention, as well as information on how to deal with living with cancer.

15 years of email service

To deal with the increasing inquiries pouring in by mail, the KID eventually established an email service in 2001 – initially with just two doctors. Since then, the email team has grown to 9 people and has answered about 70,000 queries in total. Today, it takes about 2 working days to receive a comprehensive and individual written response. For some patients and their loved ones, the service is indispensable as it can help prepare them for a consultation with their

doctor or help decide on therapy options. The channel is used even amongst experts, as they can reach the service around the clock.

For medical specialists

Established in 2014, the special service for medical practitioners, www.krebsinformationsdienst.med, has remained a tried and tested part of the KID's service. Doctors, caregivers, therapists, and counselors used the special hotline 0800 – 430 40 50 or the email address kid.med@dkfz.de roughly 1,800 times in 2015. "Doctors often ask for additional support for their oncological patients," says Dr. Weg-Remers. "We've been overwhelmed with the positive feedback from users of our special service for medical professionals. It's a real help to them."

The current annual report of the Cancer Information Service can be viewed online at <https://www.krebsinformationsdienst.de/info/jahresbericht-krebsinformationsdienst-2015.pdf>

Info

Questions about cancer? We are here for you.

For patients, loved ones, and anyone seeking advice

Telephone: 0800 – 420 30 40, every day from 8AM to 8PM

E-Mail: krebsinformationsdienst@dkfz.de

Internet: www.krebsinformationsdienst.de

Photo Material

A photo for the press release can be downloaded at:

www.dkfz.de/de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2016/bilder/KID-kreisdiagramm-bgkeyvisual.jpg

Caption: What patients ask: Breast and prostate cancer are the most asked about.

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The Cancer Information Service (KID) has been helping those seeking advice on cancer since 1986. The KID website provides current knowledge, useful tips, addresses, links and references to professional sources. Whether on the phone, via email, or in person in Heidelberg or Dresden, the KID answers questions of those seeking advice. The KID's Facebook page shares current news and invites its followers to discuss issues. The KID is a free service of the DKFZ, made available by public funding. It is therefore independent, free of conflicts of interest and does not engage in advertising.

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 3,000 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 the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers, with ninety percent of its funding coming from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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