



Tays Cancer Centre

**Regional cancer centre
FICAN Mid**

Annual Report
2019-2020



An international accreditation process of Tays Cancer Centre was a demanding but rewarding process



IN SEPTEMBER 2019, Tays Cancer Centre received the certified OEI Cancer Centre status. OEI (**Organisation of European Cancer Institutes**) gives this accreditation to institutions, who fulfill the demanding Cancer

Centre Quality Standards, as specified by OEI. The accreditation process started in 2016, and the preparations involved a significant number of professionals and researchers, as well as patients and hospital administration. The certificate is valid for 5 years, so a re-accreditation is due in 2024.

Getting rewarded with a certificate is always a happy thing. The best reward for us, however, was actually the process itself, and all the improvements that took place during these years. The accreditation standards outlined

the essential elements of a high quality Cancer Centre. With the help of the accreditation process itself, we were able to form and improve our processes: organization of our services, patient empowerment, good clinical care, research integration and education of professionals and researchers.

Creating a Cancer Centre inside the organizational structure of a typical Nordic University Hospital is not an easy task. With the help of the accreditation program, we established our overarching Tays Cancer Centre in 2018. Tays Cancer Centre concentrates on improving cancer patient pathways and facilitating research focused on cancer. In this Annual Report, we present some selected highlights of our activities.

ANNIKA AURANEN Chief Physician
Regional Cancer Centre FICAN Mid



The effects of corona virus in oncology units

DURING the corona epidemic, the protection of cancer patients from the virus infection was emphasized, because cancer treatments weaken the immune system and patients are prone to infections and their more severe forms. In Spring 2020 the Department of Oncology was lead by management team **Tuula Lehtinen** (right) and **Maarit Bärlund**. Despite the epidemic, urgent cancer treat-

ments were provided as usual, and treatment visits could be carried out safely. At the Department of Oncology, special attention was paid to safety. Handshakes were abandoned and facemasks brought into use. Some follow-up visits were carried out remotely, and this practice was well accepted.

In April 2020, an online web-based corona symptom ques-

tionnaire was brought into use for the patients who were receiving cancer drug therapies at the outpatient clinic. The aim of the questionnaire was to find the symptomatic patients as early as possible. A separate coronavirus testing site was established in the Radiation Therapy Unit through which it was possible to test, on a rapid schedule, patients with even minor symptoms coming for radiation therapy.

Corona vaccinations started in the beginning of 2021. After vaccinations of the personnel in the intensive care unit, the vaccinations started among the staff of the oncology clinic.

"Multidisciplinary teams focus on improving cancer patient pathways. Professionals from different specialities and professions, as well as patient representatives, are involved."

Multidisciplinary tumor teams



SARI-MARJA HYTÖNEN
Quality Director

MULTIDISCIPLINARY tumor teams (MDT) are formed by professionals from different specialities, professions and health care level (primary/specialized health care) to improve patient pathways and treatment processes. The processes are improved together with patient representatives. By 2020, 7 different

MDTs have been established in Tays Cancer Centre, the most recent being the lymphoma MDT. In 2020, the lung cancer MDT **published lung cancer treatment pathway**. This was the first united treatment pathway for the whole University hospital region, covering three hospital districts.

Psychosocial support

THE UNIT for psychosocial support opened its doors at Tays Cancer Centre in May 2020. The professionals working in this unit are nurse practitioners **Susanna Putama**, **Pia Vänskä** and **Marjo Saloheimo** and psychiatrist **Kimmo Tiainen**. For identification of patients needing professional psychosocial support, all cancer patients admitted to the oncology outpatient clinic are screened for the need of psychosocial support. The main function of the unit is to provide psychosocial support to cancer patients, identify the patients in illness crisis and ensure psychiatric follow-up for patients who need long-term support. The following **PIL** (patient information leaflet, potilasesite only in Finnish) has been made to support the activity.

Gero-oncology practices

GERIATRIC ONCOLOGICAL practices (read more) were launched at Tays Cancer Centre with a pilot study in 2018. Since then, it has become a part of normal clinical practices. It means the comprehensive evaluation of the state of health and performance status of cancer patients over 75 years. The aim is to improve the conditions of vulnerable patients to better tolerate cancer treatments and to tailor treatments according to their performance status. On the other hand, efforts are being made to identify those fragile patients for whom it is not meaningful or safe to initiate cancer drug therapy. The new practices have been developed by a multiprofessional team.



The challenging special level palliative care and consultations

Tays Palliative Centre was established in February 2020 in collaboration with **Tays Palliative Care Unit**, Tays Home Hospital and **Pirkanmaa Hospice**. Tays Palliative Centre treats patients in need of special level palliative care and consultations and coordinates critical pathways of palliative care in the Tays special responsibility area. Also, in collaboration with Tampere University, the Centre participates in teaching and training in palliative care and palliative medicine organized in the Hospital District and conducts scien-

tific research in this field. The unit is headed by chief physician **Juho Lehto**, who was appointed as a Professor of Palliative Medicine in Tampere University in 2020 <https://research.tuni.fi/palliative-care/> (read more). He is also leading a national EduPal development project for palliative education.

Systematic collaboration is focused on the Unit's palliative consultation team who is serving especially the most challenging patients in need of palliative and terminal care in the Tays special

responsibility area. The patients in need of short-term palliative intervention are treated in the inpatient Oncology Ward RS1. The main focus of the improvement plan in palliative care is currently on implementation of early integrated palliative care and intensification of home hospital and home hospice care activities. The development of shared electronic patient record system between Tays Cancer Centre units and Pirkanmaa Hospice will facilitate operation and further increase patient safety in the near future.

Cancer Nursing Network assembles

A **WORKING** group of FICAN Mid regions' cancer nursing specialists began its work at the turn of the year 2021. The purpose of the Cancer Nursing Network is to advance the collaboration of specialists between Tays special responsibility area. The common platform enables exchanging of ideas between the professionals and raises awareness of the func-

tion of the units at our region. In turn, each unit prepares a presentation of their nursing practices for the meeting. By networking this way, we get to know each other and our ways of working. The identification of training needs, everybody's hopes and wishes will be heard that way. The network meets 2-4 times yearly.

"It is important to advance collaboration and implementation of congruent practices within the whole Tays special responsibility area. My goal is to highlight the profile of cancer nursing improvement projects and nursing research."



MARJUT NIEMINEN
Clinical Nurse Specialist
FICAN Mid

Safe providing of cancer drug therapy

DEVELOPING safe procedures is an essential part of the quality assurance of cancer drug therapies. A multi-disciplinary team has been set up to coordinate the development and it meets regularly under the control of Pirkanmaa Hospital District's Safe Medication Working Group. Among other things, the key objectives of the team are to agree on common

practices in cancer drug therapies, promote patient safety and safe working practices as well as work towards the establishment of a quality system of cancer drug therapies.

The common goal is to promote the implementation of uniform practices throughout Tays special responsibility area. A shared web based platform for patient and treat-

ment guidelines of cancer drug therapies is currently under investigation. In the end of 2020, the long-awaited electronic exam for cancer drug therapies was completed to be performed as part of online medication training program (LOVe). All staff involved in the treatment of patients receiving cancer drug therapies are required to complete the basic part of the exam. The extended version of the exam is for the nurses providing cancer drug therapies.

The previously piloted cancer drug therapy patient education checklist was updated 2019. The purpose of the checklist is to harmonise patient education practices and further improve patient safety. The checklist serves as a support to healthcare professional's memory. At Department of Oncology, the use of the checklist is integrated into the electronic patient record system as part of patient visits. Further research is being launched on the effectiveness of the use of the checklist.



Research centres gather cancer researchers to work together

IN 2020, Tampere University started a new organizational structure in research: research centres. The first faculty that started to nominate research centers was the Faculty of Medicine and Health Technology. It appointed five research centres, two of which have cancer research. These appointments were made based on the scientific evaluation by an international Scientific Advisory Board.

Research centres have several research groups that a common

research topic is combining. The goal is to gather critical mass and knowledge at the research centre to ensure high level research, tells the Dean, **Tapio Visakorpi**.

In Prostate Cancer Research Centre (PCRC), the research is focused on the most common cancer of men. The aim is to reduce the number of deaths caused by prostate cancer. PCRC is the largest research concentration in its field in Finland. It brings together ten research groups and more than 70 experts in various

fields to study how prostate cancer arises and progresses as well as its prevention, diagnostics, and treatments of prostate cancer.

In Tampere Centre for Child, Adolescent and Maternal Health Research (TAMCAM), there works a research group focusing on children **leukemia** that is the most common cancer in children. New pediatric anticancer drugs are being studied at Finland's first Paediatric Early Phase Clinical Trials Unit, **PeeTU**, which works closely with TAMCAM.

Professor Steven Bova studies high-risk prostate cancer



STEVE BOVA is a prostate cancer researcher who joined Tampere University in 2011. His research group is working on developing systems for improved services for patients with cancer either already spread or at risk of spread outside the primary cancer site. He is piloting this work in men with prostate cancer.

Prof. Bova got his start in prostate cancer research at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he worked from 1991–2011. At the same time, he worked doing cancer genomics in Brady Urological Institute. He realized that cancer genomics might allow us to study the evolution of cancer from the primary site to metastases.

In 1994, Bova started one of the first combined clinical-molecular autopsy studies of cancer titled "PELICAN" for Project to ELIminate lethal CANcer. This study was risky. It took 15 years, until 2009, before the first major discoveries came to light. Researchers at Tampere University and Tampere University Hospital were key collaborators in this study. This is how Prof. Bova became acquainted with Tampere.

In Tampere, Prof. Bova, together with colleagues have used detailed clinical and genomic analyses in the PELICAN study to describe, for the first time, the evolutionary history of lethal metastatic prostate cancer. These observations allowed Prof. Bova and his team to identify the first observed case of subclone eradication in a metastatic solid tumor. This discovery means that in some cases, chemotherapy actually does kill major branches of the "family tree" of a cancer. By comparing the molecular findings in the eradicated and the resistant branches, it appears that it may be possible to identify drugs and treatments that could eliminate the remaining parts of the tumor. This work is now underway.

The full article can be read [here](#).

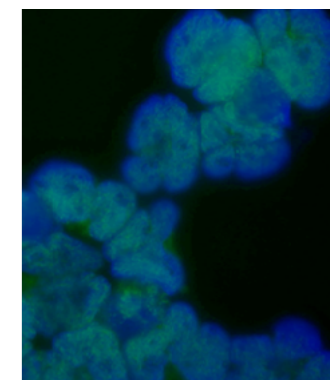
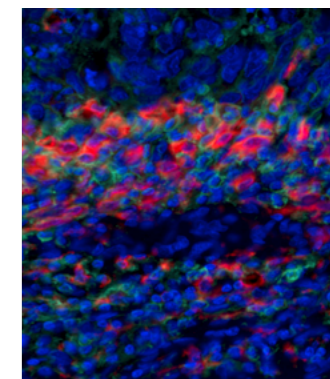
Research supporting activities

International **CANCER SEMINAR SERIES** is organized in collaboration with Tampere University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Technology. Seminars are held once a month.

RESEARCHER TRAINING COURSES share information and deepen expertise in areas important to researchers, such as applying for research funding and scientific communication, and publishing their own results. Research plan and Grant writing course is held during the spring semesters and Scientific writing and presentation course during the autumn semesters.

RESEARCH FORUM events bring together researchers and students from Tampere University as well as cancer care personnel and researchers from Tampere University Hospital to discuss, learn more and network.

GENETIC INFORMATION IN CANCER CARE seminar was organized in collaboration with the Profitu-project of Tampere University of Applied Sciences for the first time in October 2020. Approximately 350 persons all over Finland attended to the event and learned more about genetic information and how it can be used in cancer care.



Stained cancer cells (colorectal cancer and brain tumors) by microscopy.

Examples of Publications, years 2019–2020

Docetaxel Versus Surveillance After Radical Radiotherapy for Intermediate- or High-risk Prostate Cancer-Results from the Prospective, Randomised, Open-label Phase III SPCG-13 Trial
[Kellokumpu-Lehtinen P. et al.](#) Eur Urol. 2019 Dec;76(6):823-830.

Prostate cancer evolution from multilineage primary to single lineage metastases with implications for liquid biopsy
[Woodcock D. J. et al.](#) Nat Commun. 2020 Oct 8;11(1):5070.

AR and ERG drive the expression of prostate cancer specific long noncoding RNAs
[Kohvakka A. et al.](#) Oncogene. 2020 Jul;39(30):5241-5251.

Immunogenomic Landscape of Hematological Malignancies
[Dufva O. et al.](#) Cancer Cell. 2020 Sep 14;38(3):380-399.e13.

Niraparib plus bevacizumab versus niraparib alone for platinum-sensitive recurrent ovarian cancer (NSGO-AVANOVA2/ENGOT-ov24): a randomised, phase 2, superiority trial
[Mansoor Raza Mirza et al.](#) Lancet Oncol. 2019 Oct;20(10):1409-1419.

"High-level cancer research plays a key role in development of cancer care and diagnostics. I plan and execute various new collaboration projects and research trainings for cancer researchers working at the Tampere University and at Tampere University Hospital."



MERJA HELENIUS
Special adviser,
Development coordinator
FICAN Mid

Regional cancer centre FICAN Mid improves treatment pathways and research opportunities in the Tampere University Hospital catchment area

FICAN Mid (in Finnish Sisä-Suomen syöpäkeskus) is one of the five regional cancer centres in Finland. It is part of the national cancer centre network, FICAN. It is formed by four contracting partners: Hospital Districts of Pirkanmaa, Kanta-Häme and Etelä-Pohjanmaa and Tampere

University. The regional cancer centres were established under guidance of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and they started working in 2018. The main task for the regional cancer centre is to unify cancer treatments and processes in the area and improve quality and

integration of research to clinical care. Education of professionals is also one of the tasks of FICAN Mid. Currently, FICAN Mid has 3 full-time employees. **A steering board** and two acting working groups, the **Clinical** and **Scientific** working groups, participate in fulfilling the tasks of FICAN Mid.

Survivorship care plan – an individualized aid for a cancer patient

GETTING a cancer diagnosis has many consequences for a person. Medical treatment and good collaboration between the patient and all health care professionals and health care providers is of course important, but also non-medical issues call for attention. The diagnosis affects work life, social relations, rehabilitation might be needed. A cancer patient survivorship care plan means, that all issues, as well medical as non-medical, are discussed and relevant contact information and future plans are written

down to form an individualized plan for the patients future.

In Tays Cancer Centre, two workshops were arranged in Fall 2019/Spring 2020 together with patients, patient organisation, occupational, primary and specialized health care professional to plan a Tays Cancer Centre Survivorship care plan format. Currently, we wait for the fading of the Corona pandemic before continuing with the technical implementation of the **Survivorship care plan.**

Tays Cancer Centre Patient Forum

TAYS Cancer Centre **Patient Forum** has been functioning since 2017. Currently there are 16 members in the Forum. In the patient forum, the members can participate in developing services at the Centre. In normal circumstances, the patient forum meets 4 times yearly. Due to the Corona virus restrictions, the forum had only one meeting in 2020. The contact person for patient forum is **Marjut Nieminen.**

2019 & 2020 in numbers

2019		2020
5 117	New cancer patients	5 048
20 185	Patients on treatment or follow-up	20 651
161 683	Outpatient visits (including radiotherapy and chemotherapy visits)	167 597
84	Ongoing clinical trials	92
209	Cancer-related publications in international journals	204

Customer satisfaction 4.8/5



Tays
Cancer Centre

FICANMid
SISÄ-SUOMEN SYÖPÄKESKUS

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