

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your continued support to the WHO Ukraine Cancer Emergency Response. On 26 April, we convened a meeting of partners to share the initial findings of our rapid cancer capacity assessment in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. This survey has focused on clinical and staffing capacity. While the conflict has detrimentally disrupted healthcare services in certain regions, particularly in the east of the country, cancer care services are continuing elsewhere, especially in the west where many healthcare workers have migrated to. The vast majority of Ukrainian adult cancer patients remain in Ukraine, attempting to receive care from available centres. According to data sources, Poland has experienced the largest influx of cancer patients followed by Moldova. In most neighbouring countries, readiness plans for receiving Ukrainian refugees continue apace. The greatest needs, in terms of new diagnoses requiring continuous access to cancer treatment, remain for Ukrainian patients located in Ukraine. For now, most cancer centres in Ukraine are not reporting staffing shortages or capacity limitations; however, there are concerns about medicine stockouts and equipment maintenance. The majority of childhood cancer patients are now outside of Ukraine, in large thanks to the coordinated activities of our partner, St Jude Children's Research Hospital and other collaborators. You can read further details of our survey findings below.

Challenges persist in matching available funding and donations to the most acute needs in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. Our WHO emergency cancer response team serves as an expert reference group and members are available to review any funding requests and proposals to help ensure that supply and demand are aligned in the most effective way possible. Meanwhile, the WHO team is continuing to provide intelligence and planning support to Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova through our WHO Country Offices. We thank you for your ongoing engagement during this crisis and again, we acknowledge the financial support of the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Foundation for enabling our work. As ever, please feel free to contact our team directly at eurocancer@who.int.

Carina Ferreira-Borges, on behalf of the WHO Emergency cancer response team

1. UKRAINE OVERVIEW

- Disruption to health services across Ukraine has been catastrophic, compounded by the displacement of millions of people, while millions of others remain trapped in conflict areas. At a **High-Level International Donors' Conference for Ukraine** on 05 May, WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, called for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire for Mariupol and other encircled cities, to allow civilians to evacuate, and to allow WHO and our partners to deliver vital supplies and assess health needs".
- WHO continues to work with the MoH of Ukraine and refugee-hosting countries to ensure safe **medical evacuation of patients**. Transportation of patients within Ukraine is ensured by the national emergency services, while transportation across the border to the European Union (EU) is managed by international emergency medical teams and NGOs. To date, over 200 Ukrainian patients have been evacuated from Poland and Ukraine to 11 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Sweden). WHO and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism conducted an assessment of a potential site for a reception centre for transitioning Ukraine patients through Poland to other EU Member States. The centre will provide basic health services for stable patients and coordinate patient flow for medical evacuations. WHO in Poland will support the centre's operations.

KEY STATISTICS

>50,000 Ukrainians with cancer remain in Ukraine

88% of UKR cancer facilities report diminished ability to provide services

7.7 mil internally displaced persons

2. CANCER CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

WHO team convened a dialogue (26 Apr) to share intelligence on the current situation. The session was opened by Dr Arman Kacharian, cancer focal point, Ministry of Health of Ukraine, who spoke about an evacuation mechanism, approved in collaboration with WHO and professional associations. Richard Sullivan, from King's College London, shared concerns that as assaults in the Donbass region escalate, the difficulty to reach cancer facilities will increase. He also cautioned that there are hundreds of NGOs operating in Ukraine with massive fundraising taking place but without certainty or accountability for how money is being directed to the actual emergency needs in the field.

Yaroslav Pynda from IAEA discussed radiotherapy capacity in Ukraine. The DIRAC database has now been updated with radiotherapy equipment status (Feb 2022), acting as a baseline for monitoring. A dosimetry audit of radiotherapy machines in Ukraine will go ahead as planned. Ruslan Baltaga, head of the Institute of Oncology in the Republic of Moldova, informed that there were 191 registered cancer patients in Moldova: 76 had accepted transfer to other EU countries, 115 had decided to stay in Moldova. Moldova has decided to treat refugees with cancer for those cancer types where there are no long waiting lists according to available capacity. This excludes, for example, gynaecological cancers, breast cancer, as well as head and neck cancer.

The WHO team then shared preliminary findings of the **rapid cancer capacity assessment** that was undertaken in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. The first survey results indicated that:

- A large majority of Ukrainian adults with cancer remain in Ukraine. The cancer capacity assessment was conducted in **32 facilities** in Ukraine, providing care to approx. **50,000 cancer patients**. Major concerns are the limitations in providing palliative care, radiotherapy, and diagnostic imaging. Most of the workforce remains in Ukraine. The facilities that have the most capacity are located outside conflict areas. The majority of children with cancer are being treated outside of Ukraine. Despite a high number of responses from radiotherapy facilities and a reported high number of radiotherapy machines, there is no guarantee that radiotherapy will remain available in the near future.
- In neighbouring countries, the cancer capacity assessment was conducted in **12 facilities** that have provided care to **439 cancer patients**. Most of these facilities confirmed their capacity to treat patients from Ukraine. Across the facilities in neighbouring countries, the main reported limitations in capacity were providing surgical care, pathology, and bone marrow transplants. Most of the governments covered, and continue to cover, services for cancer patients.

The WHO team is continuing with previously identified key work streams:

- **gathering intelligence** to inform actions and coordinate decision-making, addressing the need to routinely gather data within Ukraine and identify cancer care needs as the conflict extends over time.
- **providing technical assistance** to ensure service delivery for Ukrainians living with cancer.
- **strengthening coordination mechanisms**, ensuring effective communication between all partners and engaging in advocacy for refugees with cancer.

The meeting concluded with key contributions from our partners:

- Cinthia Lemos (European Commission) spoke on the SOPs developed for patient evacuation from Ukraine and Moldova to EU countries. Cancer patients represent a quarter of patients who were evacuated.
- Mike Morrissey (European Cancer Organisation) spoke about work being done through the Special Network with professional associations, and efforts to provide psychosocial support to Ukrainian cancer patients.
- Taisiya Yakimkova (SAFER Ukraine, St Jude Children's Research Hospital) spoke about the experience evacuating Ukrainian children with cancer, including the creation of a unified registry for patients crossing the Ukrainian border.

3. WHO TEAM

WHO Emergency cancer response team

Chair: Carina Ferreira-Borges, Strategic Advisor NCD Management, WHO Regional Office for Europe	André Ilbawi, Cancer control officer and focal point, WHO Headquarters
Roberta Ortiz Sequeira, Cancer Control Officer, WHO Headquarters	María Lasierra Losada, Technical Officer, Cancer Management, WHO/Europe
Allison Ekberg, Health Policy Adviser, Cancer Management, WHO/Europe	Benjamin O. Anderson, Medical Officer, Cancer Control, WHO Headquarters
Andrii Skipalskyi, Technical Officer, WHO Country Office, Ukraine	Slava Kopetskyi, National Cancer Institute, Ukraine
Mykola Zubaryev, National Cancer Institute, Ukraine	Richard Sullivan, Co-director, Conflict and Health Research Group, King's College London
Rolando Camacho, Consultant, Cancer Management, WHO/Europe	Filipa Alves da Costa, Public Health Specialist, WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases
Felipe Roitberg, Consultant, Cancer Management, WHO HQ	Torgyn Issa, Pan-European Leadership Academy participant, Cancer Management, WHO/Europe
Maebh Ní Fhallúin, Communications Consultant, Cancer Management, WHO/Europe	

4. RELEVANT LINKS

- [WHO/Europe weekly external situation reports on Ukraine](#)
- [WHO/Europe news on Ukraine](#)
- [WHO latest information on Ukraine Emergency](#)
- [WHO news on Ukraine](#)
- [WHO Guidance Note for Medical Supply Donations](#)
- [Donate to WHO Foundation](#)
- [ECO-ASCO Special Network: Impact of the War in Ukraine on Cancer](#)
- [WHO/Europe's United Action Against Cancer pan-European cancer movement](#)
- [Cancer in a time of war: the Kyiv oncologists dispensing refuge and hope](#) (The Guardian, 02 May 2022)
- [Clinical triallists in Ukraine determined to continue](#) (Lancet, 30 April 2022)
- [Ukrainian people with chronic diseases face massive challenges in accessing health care, according to new WHO survey](#) (WHO, 22 April 2022)
- [Inside the war: life in Ukraine](#) (BMJ IJGC, 08 April 2022)
- [Health impacts of the Russian invasion in Ukraine: need for global health action](#) (Lancet 31 March 2022)
- [Resilience and perseverance under siege: providing cancer care during the invasion of Ukraine](#) (Lancet Oncology, 25 March 2022)
- [Conflict in Ukraine and its impact on cancer care](#) (Lancet Oncology, 11 March)
- [Government of Republic of Moldova Refugee Information Platform](#) (Incl. donations for refugees from Ukraine)
- [National Comprehensive Cancer Network \(NCCN\) Patient Guidelines with Ukrainian Translations](#) - Free cancer resources for patients and caregivers translated into Ukrainian, including breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer, diffuse large b-cell lymphoma, head and neck cancers, and distress during cancer care.