Interdisciplinary treatment based on a personalized plan

At the CCC ER-EMN institutions, all types of cancer are diagnosed and treated as gently and effectively as possible using the most advanced modern technologies. Specially trained nurses and psychologists are there to assist patients during the treatment phase. Due to the high level of research activity at the CCC ER-EMN, patients have access to innovative therapeutic approaches. All treatment decisions are taken jointly by the experts in each specialty, at meetings known as “tumor conferences.”

In 2016 a molecular tumor board was established. Patients suspected to have a complex oncological syndrome or with advanced/metastatic solid cancers are presented in the board and can be tested with a comprehensive cancer-genpanel. The results improve clinical decision making of innovative therapies.

Aims of the CCC ER-EMN

• Interdisciplinary and inter-organizational optimization of care for oncology patients;
• Interdisciplinary and inter-organizational support for cancer research at the level of clinical research, epidemiological research, translational research, and basic research;
• Support for regional collaboration in the field of tumor diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care together with other hospitals - particularly university teaching hospitals, specialist oncology practices, specialist physicians and family doctors, hospices, and rehabilitation facilities;
• Support for interdisciplinary and inter-organizational teaching in oncology;
• Recruitment of highly talented junior staff for clinical care and research.

Research

If possible, patients are treated in the framework of clinical studies. This means that they directly benefit from clinical progress and can be treated in accordance with the highest safety standards in the context of clinical trials. Links with the Center for Clinical Studies (CCS; compare own report) at UK Erlangen and with the study coordination offices at the cooperating hospitals are available for this purpose.

Patient care and clinical research at UK Erlangen are supported by a structured IT approach. This consists mainly of the electronic patient file system SoarianTM and the data warehouse tool CognosTM. Supplementary to these IT systems, there are commercial IT solutions for cancer registry, trial management, and biobanking. Data for cancer patients at CCC ER-EMN are documented in three clinical cancer registries. This enables scientists in the field of cancer research to analyze disease courses and investigate and develop improved treatments. Research on biomaterials forms the basis for new discoveries. For this purpose, a biomaterials bank has been set up for tumor tissue, tissue from healthy controls, and also body fluids (e.g. pleural effusions, urine, etc.) as well as DNA from tumor patients and control individuals. These biomaterials are used with the consent of the patients involved and enable the development of investigational methods at the highest scientific standards to pursue major research goals - speeding up medical progress with new discoveries and the development of new forms of treatment. The core units “tissue based automated RNA and DNA diagnostics” and “cell line construction” have been set up at the CCC ER-EMN.

There are currently major translational research groups for six different tumor entities at the CCC ER-EMN: breast cancer, leukemia and lymphoma, lung cancer, melanoma, renal cell cancer, and colorectal cancer. Approaches for other tumor entities are also being pursued.

Teaching

The center offers physicians, private medical practices, and hospitals the opportunity to receive further training in the various fields involved in oncology and to consult with experts in difficult treatment cases. In addition, CCC ER-EMN provides a series of lectures for physicians and scientists in the field of cancer research.