



Report:

First Congress on Early Detection of Childhood Cancer in Tamaulipas

(Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, 16–17 June 2008)

The Civic Center of Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas was the venue for this congress, in which over 1,000 persons participated and which was organized as part of the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION AGAINST CANCER based in Ciudad Victoria established in 1993.

Congress Objectives

1. Celebrate the association's 15th anniversary.
2. Provide updates on childhood cancer to as training for the health professionals who participated.
3. Provide updates on childhood cancer as part of continuing education for health professionals.
4. Raise the level of awareness of the population of Tamaulipas with regard to childhood cancer.
5. Establish dialogue among the associations active in the area of childhood cancer in Mexico.
6. Ensure that the public recognizes that 70% of childhood cancer is curable if diagnosed early.

Participants

- ✓ Health professionals from different parts of Tamaulipas state as well as the rest of Mexico.
- ✓ Professionals from different disciplines, e.g. oncologists, program directors, physicians from the health sector, dentists, general practitioners, nurses, social workers, pediatricians, psychologists, health promoters, nutritionists, hematologists, sociologists, patients living with cancer, family members, university students, and the general public.
- ✓ Local, state, and national public-sector institutions and welfare associations.



Technical and Scientific Topics from the First Day

1. "The Current State of Childhood Cancer in Mexico and Tamaulipas:" Dr. Álvaro Jiménez Romero, Pediatric oncologist, Children's Hospital of Tamaulipas.
2. "When you suspect that a child has cancer:" Dr. Aurora Medina Sanson, Chief of Pediatric Hepatology, Children's Hospital of Mexico.
3. "Warning Signs of Leukemia:" Dr. Patricia Arlene Hilario Mejía, Pediatric hematologist, Carlos Canseco General Hospital, Tampico, Tamaulipas.
4. "Warning Signs of Lymphomas:" Dr. Aurora Medina Sanson, Chief of Pediatric Hepatology, Children's Hospital of Mexico.
5. "Genetic Malformations, Cancer, and the Environment:" Dr. Cristina Cortinas de Nava, Member of the Scientific Committee of the Federal Commission against Health Risks, Department of Health.
6. "Abdominal Tumors:" Dr. Ulises de Jesús Garza Luna, Pediatric surgeon, Dr. José Eleuterio González University Hospital.
7. "Bone Tumors:" Dr. Armando Martínez Ávalos, Pediatric oncologist and Chief of the Area of Ambulatory Therapy, National Institute of Pediatrics.

8. “Tumors of the Central Nervous System:” Dr. Francisco Rivera Oetegón, Pediatric oncologist, Dr. José Eleuterio González University Hospital.
9. “Food and Childhood Cancer:” Mr. Yadira Hernández Juárez, Tamaulipas State Coordinator of the *Grow Healthy* program.
10. “Bone Marrow Transplantation:” Dr. Oscar González Llanos, Chief of Hematology Services, Dr. José Eleuterio González University Hospital.

The presentations were given by medical experts on the subject who are involved in the struggle against childhood cancer who shared their knowledge, this enabling the participants to obtain the necessary tools to be able to suspect childhood cancer in its early stages.

At the same time, there was an alternate program for voluntary/philanthropic welfare associations working in the area of childhood cancer.

Subjects Addressed in the Alternate Program

1. “History of the *Voluntary Association against Cancer*:” Mrs. Balbina Pastor Castillo, Founder and Medical Coordinator of *Voluntary Association against Cancer*.
2. “Importance of the Tasks of Welfare Associations and Their Coordination with Institutions:” Dr. Américo Villareal.
3. “Care for Beneficiaries—Our Role with Public Health Insurance.”:” Dr. Gabriel Cortés Gallo, Director General of the *Health Insurance for a New Generation*.
4. “Main Points for Attracting Professional Resources:” Mr. Marco Antonio Hernández Murrieta, President, Murrieta Foundation A.C.
5. “Laughter Therapy”, the group from the *Tell it with your smile* association.
6. “Accompanying the Patient and Their Family through the Grieving Process:” Mr. María Guadalupe Reséndez, Masters in Tanatology.

The presentations in this segment were very useful for the participants in putting forward subjects to facilitate their philanthropic work, presenting such topics as seeking opportunities for funding and “Popular Insurance and Its Linkage with the Welfare Associations.”

The *Laughter Therapy* is a group of physicians from different disciplines who, dressed as clowns, carry smiles to children suffering with cancer. The public was touched by the excellent job that these physicians are doing.

Immediately afterwards, there was a round table in which different associations working in the area of childhood cancer shared their experiences.

Associations Participating in the Round Table

- ✓ Voluntary Association against Cancer Tampico (*Voluntad Contra el Cáncer Tampico*)
- ✓ House Friend of the Children Mexico (*Casa Amiga de los Niños México*)
- ✓ Mexican Association for Assistance to Children with Cancer (*Asociación Mexicana de Ayuda a Niños con Cáncer / AMANC*)
- ✓ Light of Life Association (*Asociación Luz de Vida*), Mexico
- ✓ Teresita Foundation (*Fundación Teresita*), Reynosa
- ✓ Jordan Joyel Foundation (*Fundación Jordan Joyel*)



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The presentations were very moving and the concern that all these associations expressed was the importance of timely diagnosis of childhood cancer and the need to create a network to facilitate working together at the regional and national levels.

In the afternoon, there was the inaugural ceremony by the Governor of the State of Tamaulipas and his wife, Engineer Eugenio Hernández Flores and Mrs. Adriana González de Hernández. Despite being a formal event, there was nevertheless a family environment where everyone was united in their commitment to prevent and control childhood cancer.

In order to end the activities of the first day, Dr. Denise Dresser of Princeton University made her keynote speech on the subject of “Citizens’ Participation.”

Presentations from the Second Day

1. “Such as coping with the disease:” Mr. Rosario Reséndez, Professor of Tanatology.
2. Reiki Workshop:” Mr. Pablo Gastón Goicochea, Holistic Center of Victoria.
3. “Dietary Supplements in Cancer Management:” Dr. Mariana Herrera Pen, Children’s Hospital of Tamaulipas.
4. “Fidecomiso—Advantages and Disadvantages:” Dr. Gabriel Cortes Gallo, Director General of the *Health Insurance for a new Generation*.
5. Keynote speech “Cancer from the Social Standpoint:” Dr. Rosalba Ruiz Reyes, Officer for Chronic Degenerative Diseases, Field Office United States–Mexico Border, Pan American Health Organization.

The keynote speech presented childhood cancer from the patient’s perspective of the patient as well as its impact on the environment. It made reference to the PAHO *Regional Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Degenerative Chronic Diseases* and the *Childhood Cancer Registry* of Mexico.

Various communications media were present to cover the event and some of the presentations were broadcast in their entirety by radio and television throughout the entire state.

The *Laughter Therapy (Risa terapia)* group closed the event, which compelled all participants in the Civic Center to get up and dance. This closing commemorated the 15th Anniversary of the *Voluntary Association against Cancer*, as its directors and founders extended their thanks and offered refreshments to all participants.



It is noteworthy that the members of this association are people whose energy to help others is infectious. Indeed, they can be as described visionaries with tremendous charisma who pursue the goal of contributing to a healthy Mexico where a child who is diagnosed with cancer does not have to die.