

Celebrating 12 years of Access, Education and Hope

By Rebecca Lo bue, Floriane Laurent and Tala Allahham - June 16th, 2023.



The Oncidium foundation was created based on Dr. Richard Zimmermann's visionary idea that radiotheranostics for cancer care were going to gain momentum, which led to the next pivotal and complex question: while they are developed and for some, already proven efficient, how to make them available to the largest number of people living with cancer?

From planting the seeds to reaching the orchid

The first step was to come up with a meaningful name at its inception. Oncidium is not just a blue



flower. It refers to an Orchid, a plant that has reached the highest level of evolution in the kingdom of its kind. Orchids are also long-lasting flowering plants that come in different forms and colors, known for being difficult to grow. The parallel can be made with radiotheranostics, which are drugs that have reached the highest level of development in the drug manufacturing world. They also require a high level of medical knowledge and a specific handling environment.

Oncidium is also derived from the Greek word "onkos", meaning "tumor" and an indirect reference to cancer "oncology". As for the different shades of blue, they hint at the Cherenkov effect, with the characteristic blue glow of an underwater nuclear reactor but also is one of the ways radioactivity can be identified by the human eye.

The creation of the foundation was officialized on the 16th of June, 2011, in Belgium, which marked the strong long-term pledge: endeavoring to help people with cancer live longer and better lives. The commitment was made and it is in March 2019 that the foundation could operationally start thanks to the generous contribution of two philanthropists, already convinced about the promising future of this technology, Dr. Christian Behrenbruch and Dr. Andreas Kluge. Thus, enabling the shift from being "just" a cutting-edge idea to a concrete and functional one.

Over the past four years

The initial work force was constituted and led by General Manager, Rebecca Lo bue with Floriane Laurent and Tala Allahham that were all three in charge of carrying out the mission and goals of

Oncidium foundation. The first step was to convince key players about the role of the foundation and the importance of having an interlocutor that was closer and mindful of the end user.

Since then, 50 international Ambassadors (and counting) have joined the foundation to raise awareness through education campaigns, local collaborations, liaison with national cancer organizations, patient's associations, and shared knowledge. Thus, a strong community emerged and is continuing to grow, enabling the foundation to work beyond borders.



As the support continues to grow and more and more projects see the light of day, comes greater responsibility to ensure that the objectives are met and ensured in the long run. In 2022, Dr. Alice Viana was appointed Foundation Development Manager and brings her scientific expertise and know-how to serve the good cause. Leading the Scientific Board, her role is now to bring new projects focusing on: Enhancing Patients Access, Accelerating Clinical Developments, Improving Production Capacities, Supporting Early- Stage Developments, and Increasing Partnerships.



Over the past four years, some milestones have already been achieved. One notable accomplishment is the implementation of a comprehensive website and educational content that was thought to serve as a valuable resource for patients, healthcare professionals, and nuclear medicine experts. *For patients*, it offers extensive information on various aspects of cancer care, including cancer types, clinical trials and a worldwide map listing therapy centers providing radiotherapeutics-based treatments to help individuals find the nearest facility and evaluate if they are potential candidates for this option in cancer care.

For nuclear medicine experts and healthcare professionals, scientific and technical knowledge is made available through an updated and extensive list of radiotherapeutics (marketed, under development, discontinued, etc.) and two types of publications: “Radiotheranostics Today” providing current updates about challenges and opportunities regarding radiotheranostics and “Theranostics Insights” highlighting a specific radiopharmaceutical.

Additionally, other projects were initiated such as an international collaboration called the “Noble Registry”, focusing on providing evidence-based data on the use of ^{99m}Tc-iPSMA SPECT for adequate prostate cancer diagnostics imaging, in a long-term vision of enabling all patients with prostate cancer, regardless of origin, technology availability or financial situation, to access accurate diagnostics imaging. Lastly, the annual "Tackle Cancer Challenge," a fundraising event that rallies support and generates resources for cancer research and patient care.



Also this year, Sybille Vermeyleylen joined as an Executive Assistant to be at the forefront of the smooth transition to a larger team and bigger ambitions. Our aspirations going further, the foundation aims now to expand the team to fully serve our mission and enable an even better focus on the three pillars of the Oncidium foundation: Access, Education and Hope.

Current focus on a more inclusive future

Access is at the heart of daily activities. This implies a great deal of dedication to forming, enhancing and organizing the group of Ambassadors that are pivotal to spread the word about the existence and benefits of radiotheranostics.

Moreover, the concept of radiotheranostics is not a new one. Whether you refer to them as radiotheranostics, theranostics, theragnostics, radioligand therapy, or radionuclide therapy, they all describe an innovative approach to cancer care through a beneficial application of radioisotopes, within the Nuclear Medicine field. However, there still remains an important lack of knowledge and several apprehensions among the non-nuclear physicians and the general public about their potential.. *Education* is therefore essential to be able to understand this technology and thus, vital to truly advocate.

Last but not least, it is with great determination that the foundation continues to build *Hope* through active participation in research and development projects around access and availability, driven by the vision of improving lives globally for individuals that could benefit from personalized medicine and that in many cases cannot afford therapy costs.

Through these pillars, the Oncidium foundation continues to make an impact in the fight against cancer, fostering advancements in treatment, knowledge dissemination, and community support.



On this special day, we reaffirm our commitment to the fight against cancer. Based on the great steps in the right direction and conscious of the lessons learned, we renew our pledge to bring forward radiotheranostics for cancer care, and to make the technology available to people living with cancer whoever they are, and wherever and whenever they need it.