Young Bone Cancer Patients Produce Unique Art Exhibition

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[摘 要] 08/12/2008,- A unique art exhibition depicting the hopes and fears of children and young people with bone cancer has been produced by patients taking part in an important clinical trial aimed at improving treatment of the disease.
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A unique art exhibition depicting the hopes and fears of children and young people with bone cancer has been produced by patients taking part in an important clinical trial aimed at improving treatment of the disease.

The paintings and drawings, by teens powerful, humorous, humbling and inspiring, received their first showing at an international medical conference in Stuttgart, Germany, last week (30 November -

2 December 2008). The exhibition will now be displayed in several hospitals and clinics.

The project was the brainchild of artist Dr Lucie Bures, who teamed up with clinical research fellow Dr Martha Pertuglias of University College London Hospital, as a way of allowing cancer patients to express feelings that they might otherwise find difficult to articulate and to broadcast the importance of clinical trials in the search for better treatments of disease. The young artists are being treated at hospitals in London and Birmingham and are all taking part in an international clinical trial called EURAMOS 1, which aims to find better ways of

"We thought it would be fun for the patients to have the opportunity to do some artwork about their experiences, and to express feelings that might otherwise be difficult to express -

really to convey their own story," said Dr Bures.

Dr Pertuglias approached the patients to find out who would like to participate in the project, and Dr Bures sent them and provided materials and talked about possible ideas for their work.

"I really did not know what to expect - this is a pretty horrendous cancer -

but it was incredible to see the way that people deal with it," Dr Bures said. "It is totally inspiring." The artwork itself varies from 3d-year-

old Syed's simple pencil cartoon

strip depicting the "voice" of his cancer from diagnosis to treatment, to more elaborate and remarkably anatomically correct paintings of the bones of the leg showing the tumour.

Dr Bures was particularly thrilled with an especially moving piece created by one-year-

old Susanna, whose brother Charlie, five, is one of the patients. Susanna's work depicts the lower half of the human skeleton with a mass of tangled matter filling the pelvis and a large arrow pointing to the top of the thigh bone. The picture is entitled "My Brother's Tumo", and as Susanna explained, the reason for the peculiar title is because Charlie "said to my Mum 'why have I got a fish in my leg?' The reason for this is because he is only five years old and does not understand what a tumour is."

The exhibition includes intensely moving quotes from the patients and photographs of them working on their pieces. The photographs are particularly striking because of the broad smiles of the artists at work, when at the same time as they are receiving their chemotherapy.

For Dr Pertuglias the project was extremely worthwhile. "The patients definitely got a lot out of it," she said. "Just being able to express emotions and feelings that they might not be able to put into words, such as hopes and anxieties, was important. Also they would speak to Lizzie for maybe hours at a time and on several occasions, which was also something they appreciated a lot. It allowed the patient to focus on something positive rather than just the illness."

The conference in Stuttgart at which the exhibition received its first public showing was entitled 'The European Sarcoma Trials -

moving forward in a climate of increasing economic and regulatory pressure'. Nearly 200 doctors and scientists from across the world attended the meeting, to discuss issues relating to the development of more effective treatments of the rare cancers called sarcomas, of which osteosarcoma is one.

The art project was funded by the UK Medical Research Council, EURAMOS - the European and American Osteosarcoma Study Group -

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