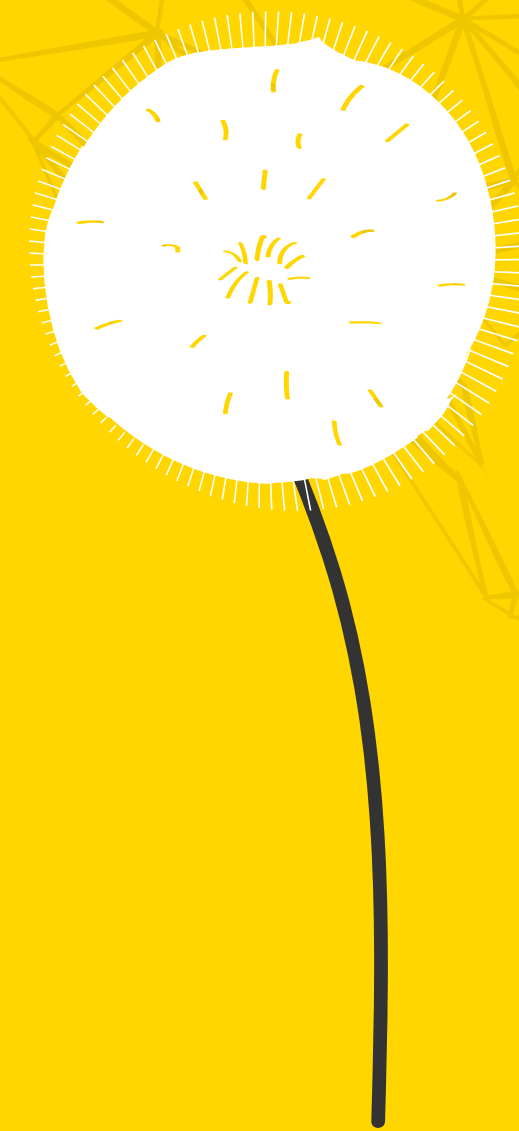


Newsletter Feb 2025



**World
CUP
Alliance**
CANCER OF UNKNOWN PRIMARY



**Cancer of Unknown Primary
in the Precision Oncology Era**

**WCA are delighted
to announce we will host
our First International
CUP hybrid conference
at ESMO 16th October
in Berlin**

[Click to Register](#)





Confirmed speakers to date

Natalie Cook

The Christie NHS Foundation, University of Manchester

Topic Integration of liquid biopsies in the management of CUP in the UK

Linda Mileskin

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

Topic Highlights of the FAPI-CUP study

Xiangchun Li

Tianjin Cancer Institute, China

Topic Prediction of tumor origin in Cancers of Unknown Primary origin with cytology-based deep learning

Alwin Krämer

German Cancer Research Center DKFZ, Germany

Topic Updated CUPISCO data resulting from the final overall survival analysis

Manel Esteller

Josep Carreras Leukaemia Research Institute, Spain

Topic New insights in Cancer of Unknown Primary provided by spatial transcriptomics

Hilde Nienhuis

University Medical Center Utrecht, the Netherlands

Topic Whole genome sequencing in CUP (CUPPA-algorithm) in clinical practice and results of the CUP clinics in the Netherlands

Ryan Huey, Kanwal Raghav

MD Anderson, United States of America

Topic Recent CUP data and ongoing work

Alison Taylor

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, England

Topic Psychological support for patients with Cancer of Unknown Primary

Tanya Knott & Warnyta Mynaard

World CUP Alliance, Ireland & the Netherland

Topic Patient perspectives

Will you be attending?

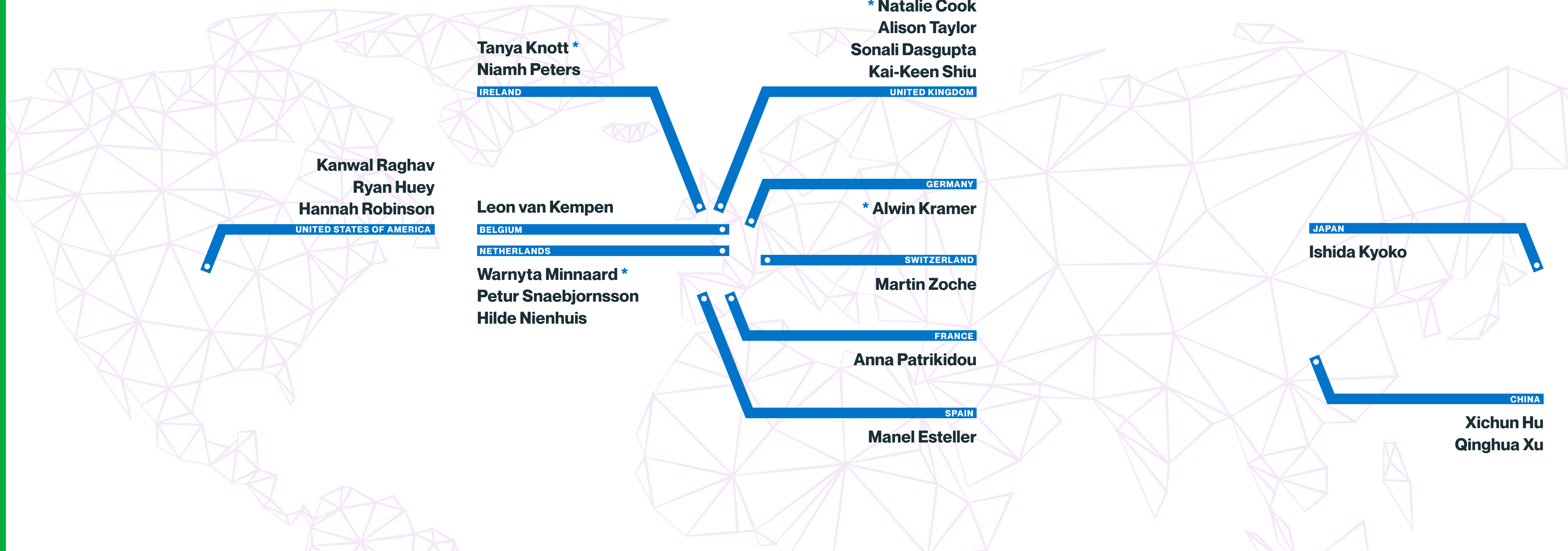
 no yes

Would you like to present your work?

 no yes

[Click to Register](#)

Clinical Advisors



WCA were delighted to welcome **new clinical advisory members** from Japan, Belgium, Wales, France, Switzerland & China.

22

WCA Clinical Advisors worldwide

4

Members forms the Steering Committee (*)

The WCA were delighted to attend ESMO 2024 in Barcelona, having advocated to the ESMO leadership team regarding the lack of inclusion of CUP in the programme a CUP educational session was included at the congress. Followed by the WCA organised roundtable discussion on access and awareness of precision oncology. The meeting was attended by over 40 clinicians.

Report will be sent out to members, please contact info@worldcupawareness.org if you would like a copy.



BERLIN 2025 **ESMO** congress

BERLIN GERMANY
17-21 OCTOBER 2025



ESMO 2025 CUP Track & Preceptorship

WCA request for a dedicated CUP Track & Preceptorship at ESMO is under discussion and we are delighted to be informed that ESMO 2025 will have a dedicated tumour agnostic track and the WCA hope to have a specialist representing CUP on the track.

Discussion on possibilities for a preceptorship remain ongoing.

2025 **ASCO**[®]
ANNUAL MEETING

We prepared a letter to advocate for a similar tumor agnostic track at ASCO

5th February 2025

Advocating for a tumor-agnostic track within ASCO

Dear Dr. Zon,

As experts and advocates for better quality care for patients with cancer of unknown primary (CUP) we are pleased to see a growing community and representation of CUP and innovations in tumor-agnostic strategies at annual conferences such as ASCO and ESMO.

Unfortunately, there has been no dedicated CUP clinical session at ASCO in recent years. At ASCO 2024 there were only three poster presentations dealing with CUP that we are aware of. We nevertheless were able to create a small "CUP corner" where a few experts met and exchanged ideas. Nonetheless, the lack of a dedicated and specific disease-focused session prevents larger and fruitful discussions with and among the growing number of interested experts in this field.

The increasing use of molecular profiling, tissue-of-origin classifiers and tumor-agnostic therapies has already started to transform the diagnostic and therapeutic management of patients with CUP, with increased knowledge and improved prognosis in this devastating but still orphan malignancy. Recent work has started to demonstrate first benefits, as shown in the increasing number of successful clinical trials that have been published within the past two years, including CUPISCO, FUDAN-001, CheCUP, and NIVOCUP 1-4. Moreover, as per the definition of CUP, the tissue-of-origin remains unclear. CUP can serve as a paradigm disorder for the development of tumor-agnostic treatments and a molecular, tissue-independent cancer classification. Additionally, as the availability of tumor tissue for molecular analyses is typically scarce in CUP, the emergence of liquid biopsies as a source of biomarkers is also gaining rapid ground in CUP5.

Alongside these research and clinical advances, clinicians, scientists, patient advocates and the wider pharmaceutical and diagnostics industry are fostering more collaborations in CUP and are working together to launch new research, clinical and educational opportunities for this patient group. As such the World CUP Alliance (WCA) (www.worldcupawareness.org)

Meet the WCA Steering Committee



Natalie Cook

Senior Clinical Lecturer in
Experimental Cancer Medicine
and Honorary Consultant

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust,
Manchester, UK christie.nhs.uk



Alwin Kramer

Head of division molecular
hematology/oncology

German Cancer Research Center
Heidelberg, Germany
dkfz.de



Tanya Knott

WCA co-founder

Sarah Jennifer Knott Foundation
(Founder) Dublin, Ireland
sjkfoundation.org



Warnyta Minnaard

WCA co-founder

Missie Tumor Onbekend (Founder)
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
missietumoronbekend.nl

The Steering Committee meet monthly with the aim to fulfill the objectives agreed by WCA members. The WCA Clinical Advisors team meets quarterly to discuss ongoing plans, objectives and share ideas.



Dr Sonali Dasgupta

Consultant Medical Oncologist

Velindre University NHS
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Huge congratulations to WCA member Dr Sonali Dasgupta Consultant Medical Oncologist in Velindre University NHS Trust and CUP lead for Wales. Dr Dasgupta has won a hugely deserved **National Impact award** for her work in energising CUP services in Wales. The awards are a public acknowledgement by the NHS of sustained commitment and dedication to the NHS and a recognition of the national impact of efforts over and above contractual requirements.

Warnyta Minnaard

has been appointed as project lead (*professional role*) at the Netherlands Cancer Mission Hub (*Dutch approach for the EU Beating Cancer Plan*) and is the lead on the cancer control action plans for Rare Cancers and Cancer Diagnostics.



Our People



SJK Foundation were recently awarded the prestigious E-nnova Health 2024 Award in Big Data and Artificial Intelligence alongside eminent researcher **Dr. Manel Esteller**. This recognition highlights the innovative diagnostic advancements achieved through SpaceCUP, a pioneering project dedicated to improving the lives for patients with Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP).

From left: Dr. Manel Esteller, Tanya Knott, Ruth Knott at the Award Gala in Madrid.

Dr. Manel Esteller

Director

Josep Carreras Leukaemia Research Institute
Barcelona, Spain

The idea developed by Dr. Esteller, ICREA Research Professor at the Josep Carreras Leukaemia Research Institute and Professor of Genetics at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Barcelona, is a project known as SpaceCUP, which involves analysing the human transcriptome in paraffin-embedded histological sections. Embedding tissue samples in paraffin is a commonly used methodology in pathology services at hospitals. The project focuses on patients with Cancer of Unknown Primary. This research has enabled the creation of a molecular signature that predicts the origin of these enigmatic metastases. The goal is to better characterize the type of tumor affecting these patients, improving their treatment, quality of life, and survival rates.

The SJK Ralston Project ‘from bench to bedside’ ensures all funds raised by the charity will go towards the SpaceCUP research with Dr Manel Esteller and to the ‘bedside’, supporting the incredible work of the National Molecular Tumour Board at Cancer Trials Ireland.”

Alison Taylor

AO and CUP SRG lead nurse

Clatterbridge Cancer Centre
Liverpool, United Kingdom

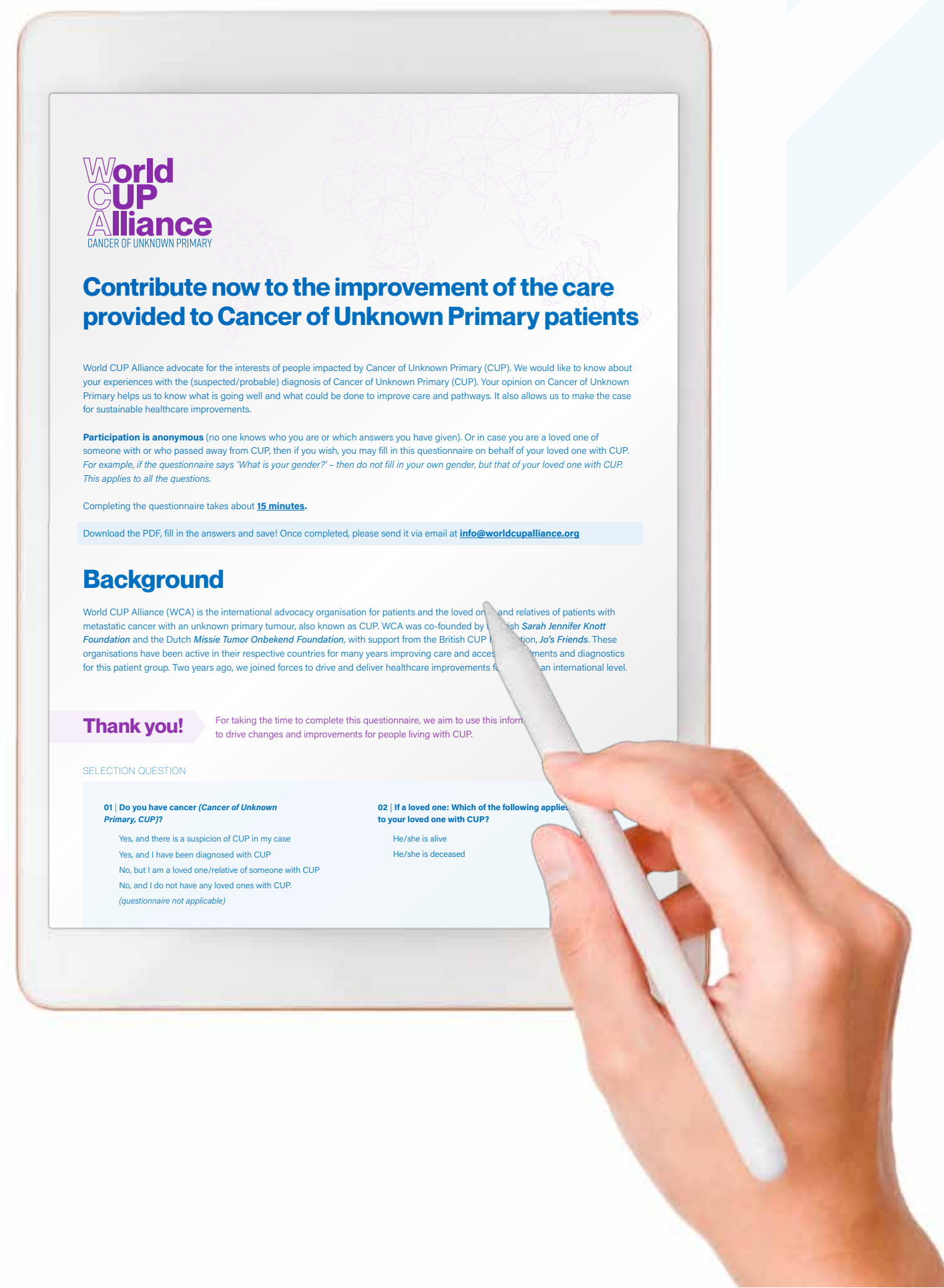
Alison Taylor is spending a week in the Netherlands visiting and exchanging learnings with Netherlands based CUP nurses and teams. Warnyta and Alison met and also discussed future WCA projects, among others a patient leaflet and recording patient stories on video.



For Patients

Patient Questionnaire

We would like to kindly inform you that the WCA CUP patient questionnaire is still available via our website [click here to download](#). You are welcome to share it with patients and/or their caretakers.



Patients Stories



We are aiming to film new patient information videos, they will be published later this year. The first ones are already available on youtube. You can also read several patients' stories on our website: worldcupawareness.org/stories

If you know any suitable patients, please get in touch!

info@worldcupawareness.org

Research **updates**



MeCUP research project

Recently, researchers at the VIB-UGent Center for Medical Biotechnology led by Professor Katleen De Preter, in collaboration with researchers at UGent and doctors affiliated with Ghent University Hospital, developed a new technique that can trace the tissue of origin.

In parallel, the University of Antwerp led by Prof Guy Van Camp and researchers from Antwerp University Hospital developed a complementary test to trace the origin of the tumor.

Unmasking CUP cancers

Both research groups have independently developed a technique to analyze DNA methylation patterns. These patterns are unique fingerprints in the DNA of each tumor and can be traced back to the organ from which the tumor originated. The Ghent researchers have made the test workable on blood, the Antwerp researchers on tissue. Both approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages and the choice of the most optimal starting material is determined by various factors. The collaboration will ultimately result in the development of a test that can demonstrate the origin of tumor tissue with high certainty on both blood and tissue.

Although the tests still need to be further validated before they can be made widely available, the studies shows that the new

approaches can be an important addition to current diagnostic tools. The techniques require only a minimal amount of DNA, are cheaper than existing alternatives, and can be widely applied to various types of samples. The results of the research by the Ghent group were published in June of this year in the scientific journal *Laboratory Investigation: A Fast, Affordable, and Minimally Invasive Diagnostic Test for Cancer of Unknown Primary Using DNA Methylation Profiling* - ScienceDirect. The Antwerp group published its results in the *British Journal of Cancer: IMPRESS: Improved methylation profiling using restriction enzymes and smMIP sequencing, combined with a new biomarker panel, creating a multi-cancer detection assay* - PubMed. >

Research **updates**

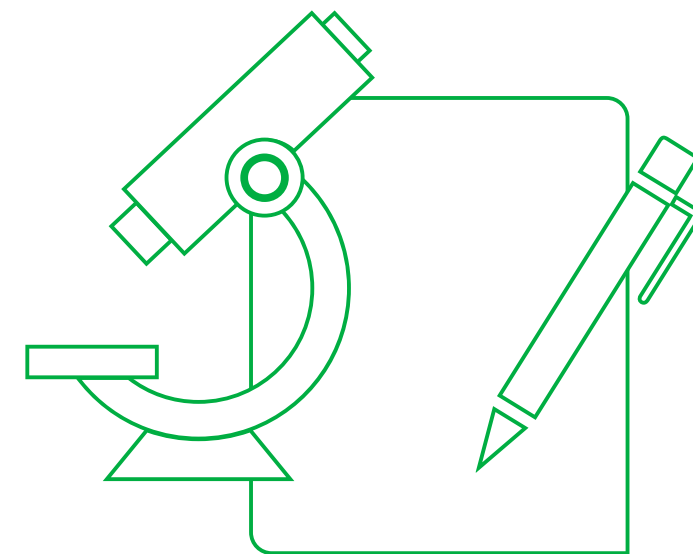
Future prospects

In order to further refine the techniques and demonstrate that it can be applied in diagnostics, the Ghent and Antwerp research groups received joint financial support from Kom op tegen Kanker to coordinate the techniques and develop them into a test that can be used for the diagnosis of CUP patients to improve diagnosis, treatment and survival.

Important in this collaboration are the ties that both research groups have with the University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG, Prof E. Schuurin), where there is already extensive experience in the molecular analysis of CUP based on tumor tissue. The study has started in November 2024.

An important part of the project is the rollout of a validated DNA methylation test on tissue and blood in Belgium.

For this, the support and collaboration with the Dutch patient organization for CUP patients Mission Tumor Unknown will be helpful. (www.steunmissietumoronbekend.nl). With their support, patients, care providers and pathologists are reached throughout the country to reduce the number of CUP diagnoses with a view to better treatment and survival.



Contact

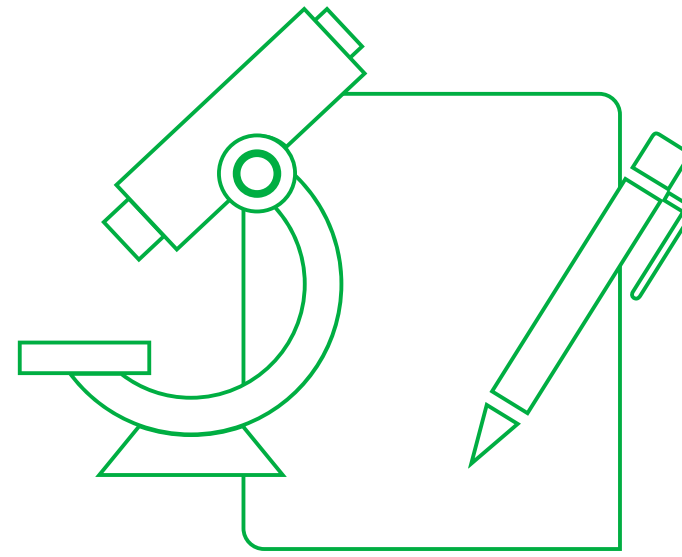
In case you are interested to learn more about this project or seek collaboration, please reach out to **Karen Zwaenepoel**, karen.zwaenepoel@uza.be and **Katleen De Preter** katleen.depreter@ugent.be

Research updates

From Wales

Historically in UK, CUP/MUO has been a part of Acute Oncology (AO) remit.

While this approach has addressed the significant challenges in the diagnostic part of pathway, it overlooks CUP-specific needs like specialised CUP MDT and CNS, building skillsets of CUP Oncologists, access to personalised treatment options and much needed clinical trials. In 2023, Wales Cancer Network (WCN) recognised CUP/MUO as independent Cancer Site Group (CSG) to promote strategic and national leadership and a forum for ratification of all Wales CUP developments.



CUP/MUO CSG has formed close links with other cancer sites/pathways and NHS Health Collaborative programmes, while maintaining and consolidating its historical relationship with Acute Oncology service (AOS). The CUP/MUO CSG has developed National Optimal Pathway (NOP) standards of care for this patient cohort. At least within UK, Wales is the first nation to recognise CUP as independent tumour site group.

Recent evidence from CUPISCO trial shows that genomic biomarker-directed treatment by using comprehensive genomic profiling improves survival in CUP patients. Currently the NHS England National Genomic Test Directory for cancer offers NTRK gene fusion and whole genome sequencing (WGS) as the only two commissioned genomic tests for CUP patients, but these

Contact

To learn more about this project, please reach out to WCA member **Dr Sonali Dasgupta**, Consultant Medical Oncologist in Velindre University NHS Trust and CUP lead for Wales
sonali.dasgupta@wales.nhs.uk

tests have limited value. The incidence of NTRK gene fusion is less than 1%; and WGS test is not yet available for adult patients with solid tumours in NHS Wales. Furthermore, WGS requires fresh solid tissue biopsy. CUP patients are usually not well enough for repeat biopsies. Funding and logistics for fresh biopsy specimens is also a significant challenge.

To overcome these barriers, in 2024, CUP CSG collaborated with All Wales Medical Genomics Service (AWMGS) to offer CUP patients in NHS Wales a commissioned multi-targeted DNA and RNA next generation sequencing (NGS) panel. Indeed, Wales is the first nation in UK to offer patients with a confirmed diagnosis of CUP a DNA and RNA gene panel NGS test as standard of care.

WCA Funding

We are pleased to announce that the WCA was recently granted a multi-year financial grant for its activities for the years 2025-27 via a sponsorship from AstraZeneca.

WCA is pleased that we are able to use this budget for several activities including the organisation of the international CUP conference, finalising of the CUP unmet needs paper and our continued advocacy for CUP representation at international conferences like ESMO and ASCO.



Team SJK Charity Cycle

Following the fundraising success of Team SJK's cycle from Paris 2 Nice in 2023 raising over €70,000, Tanya Knott and Team got back on their bikes in October 2024 and cycled over 550km in 5 days from Perpignan to Barcelona raising over €30,000 for the SJK Ralston project from 'bench to bedside' for CUP patients.



► From the left: Caitriona O'Brien, Laura Carroll, Emma Randall Quinn, Tanya Knott, Kamilla Flynn, Mary Looby

WECAN Academy

WCA are proud members of WECAN and were delighted that WCA's Sara Santarelli was able to attend the WECAN academy for patient advocacy training in Barcelona (end of training)



Looking forward to catching up with all our fellow advocates at WECAN in 2025

Upcoming Events

SAVE
THE
DATE

May

Friday 16th

All Wales Cancer Network (WCN) will host
**Cancer of Unknown Primary
(CUP)/ Malignancy of Unknown
Origin (MUO) Education
and Networking day**

Llandudno, North Wales

*This event is free to attend for Welsh
multi-disciplinary HCPs, and has a diverse range
of multidisciplinary speakers on various aspects of
diagnostic, treatment and supportive pathways for
this patient group.*

May

Monday 19th

SBK online
**Streamlining MUO/CUP
Pathways**

[Click to Register](#)

July

Friday 4th

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust will host
**Cancer of Unknown Primary:
Redefining patient care through
research and collaboration.**

The Spine, Liverpool

[Click to Register](#)

October

Thursday 16th

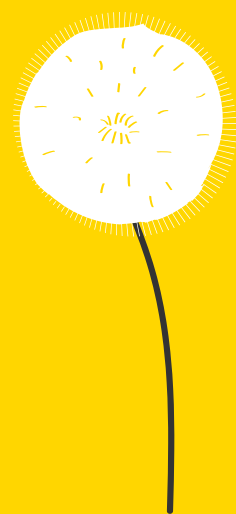
**WCA international
CUP Meeting**

Berlin

[Click to Register](#)

thank you!

If you would like to add any information
to our website please let us know.
You can contact us via email
info@worldcupawareness.org
To date we have been collecting newly
published research & patient stories.



**World
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Alliance**
CANCER OF UNKNOWN PRIMARY

Missie Tumor Onbekend
Fannius Scholtenstraat 69H
1051EV Amsterdam
The Netherlands
KvK 78057272 / RSIN 861248892

Sarah Jennifer Knott Foundation
38 Belgrave Road
Dublin 6, D06 HW22
Republic of Ireland
RCN 20157838 / CHY 22289

worldcupalliance.org