

Brazilian Society of Pediatric Oncology – SOBOPE: 30 years of history, a lot in the present, full of the future

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The history of pediatric oncology in Brazil is strongly linked to the history of the Sociedade Brasileira de Oncologia Pediátrica (SOBOPE).

In the seventies two of our most prestigious pediatric oncologists, Waldir Veiga Pereira and Vicente Odone Filho, decided to go to Memphis, USA to learn about the most recent advances in pediatric hematology and Oncology. It was there they met Rhomes João Amim Aur.

Rhodes Aur is a pioneer in pediatric hematology and oncology; the most important award in Brazilian pediatric oncology is named after him. Saint Jude Children's Hospital has a strong connection with Brazil. Since he moved to Memphis, Raul Ribeiro has continuously provided opportunities by helping Brazilian pediatric oncologists and institutions.

Silvia Brandalise also visited Dr. Odone in Saint Jude. There they talked about acute lymphoblastic leukemia and a few years later in 1980, she met Milton Ruiz, Celso Carlos Campos Guerra and Rhomes Aur in Santos to discuss the first Brazilian protocol for acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

The Brazilian society of pediatric oncology was founded in 1981 by a group of physicians led by Virgílio Carvalho Pinto. The founders were committed to change the dismal prognosis of children and adolescents with cancer. At that time diagnosis was practically a death sentence; few hospitals could offer a proper treatment. At the same time Beatriz de Camargo started the Wilms' tumor study group.⁽¹⁾

Alois Bianchi, the first head of the Pediatric Oncology Department at the A C Camargo Hospital, was the second president of SOBOPE.

With Nubia Mendonça, one of the founders and most active pediatric oncologists in Brazil, the meetings of SOBOPE became routine. She officially established the Brazilian cooperative groups. After Nubia, Waldir Pereira, Silvia Brandalise, Fernando Werneck and José Roberto Resende contributed to the growth of SOBOPE making it a more prestigious Society.

Ten years ago, with effort of one of our former presidents, Sidnei Epelman, SOBOPE started a data management center, a "Computerized Data Center". This center and the cooperative groups continued to develop with Sonia Vianna. Renato Melaragno, another former President, created a strong partnership with the Instituto Ronald Mc Donald.

All these collaborative studies resulted in National and International publications. The osteosarcoma study by Dr Petrilli demonstrated the Brazilian reality as opposed to the reality of other countries in respect to the size of tumors and metastasis.⁽²⁾ The Ewing Sarcoma Study, led by Brunetto⁽³⁾ highlighted a new combination of drugs. More recent projects are using an efficient on-line data collection system. With this quicker and more efficient system, data analysis will correct protocols in relation to toxicity. The Ewing Sarcoma protocol, like the osteosarcoma study, was developed in partnership with GALOP (the Latin American Group of Pediatric Oncology), showing that it is possible to work in harmony with other countries. The last Brazilian study of acute lymphoblastic leukemia showed new maintenance therapy.⁽⁴⁾ The cooperative group of germ cell tumors by Luiz Fernando Lopes also published their results;⁽⁵⁾ This group has a strong partnership with other international institutions that present data at international meetings.

The Brazilian Committee of Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplantation, in a joint effort between SOBOPE and the Sociedade Brasileira de Transplante de Medula Óssea (SBTMO), also published a consensus.⁽⁶⁾ This consensus, organized by the SBTMO, was developed not only with international data, but with our local experience and publications.

We cannot forget Célia Gianotti, who is internationally recognized because of her important work with the campaign for early diagnosis of retinoblastoma in Brazil.^(7,8)

The National Cancer Institute is making every effort to know about the reality of pediatric cancer in Brazil.⁽⁹⁾ We should not need to use data from other countries to infer the situation here in Brazil; a few years ago, we had no idea about the numbers of new cases.

SOBOPE is happy about this opportunity to join the *Revista Brasileira de Hematologia e Hemoterapia* (RBHH). We are very thankful to ABHH who kindly opened this door to us. This partnership will certainly further improve the quality of the RBHH. It is important to remember that the RBHH is the only scientific journal in the area of hematology in the southern hemisphere. SOBOPE is now one of the few societies of pediatric oncology that has the honor of participating in an official journal.

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