

Answers for Austria, provided by Ministry of Health of Austria

Which are the NCCP priorities with regards to rare cancers?

Rare cancers are not a specific topic within the NCCP (“National Cancer Framework Programme”) in Austria. In general, cancer patients in Austria presently receive high quality treatment and care at specialized cancer departments or centers that are part of general hospitals.

Where are rare cancer patients treated in Austria?

At present, there are no designated centres of expertise in Austria, neither for rare, nor for non-rare disorders. However, Austria is in the process (within the National Action Plan for Rare Diseases) of developing a designation process for official centres of expertise for rare diseases, which are also expected to become members of European Reference Networks. Some of the future candidates for centres of expertise are specialized in rare cancer types. These units are part of hospitals/departments dealing also with non-rare cancers and/or disorders in general (i. e. part of general or paediatric hospitals). It should be stressed that most patients with rare cancer types will find excellent treatment and care at highly specialized departments (in particular university clinics) that also treat more frequent cancer types (e. g. neoplasms of the digestive tract, neoplasms of the skin, gynaecological neoplasms). Therefore, in Austria there will most likely be no centres of expertise for these rare cancers in the future. On the other hand, some cancer types are per se rare cancers (e. g. brain tumours, haematological neoplasms, paediatric cancers). These cancers are presently already treated in specialized departments; some of these are likely to become designated centres of expertise in the near future.

How have these hospitals been identified? Did you use any criteria?

As there are presently no designated centers of expertise in Austria, no criteria have been applied yet. The criteria for centers of expertise for rare diseases (some of which will be dealing with rare cancers) will be in close correlation to those recommended by the EUCERD (European Union Committee of Experts on Rare Diseases).