



Treatment of adolescent and young adult cancer patients in Switzerland

Fresh Ideas for Cancer Care 2.0: Rare Cancer Diseases

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Agenda

1. Research Questions
2. Background
3. Methodology
4. Interview Questions
5. Results
6. Conclusion: Where are AYA with cancer treated in Switzerland?



1. Research Questions

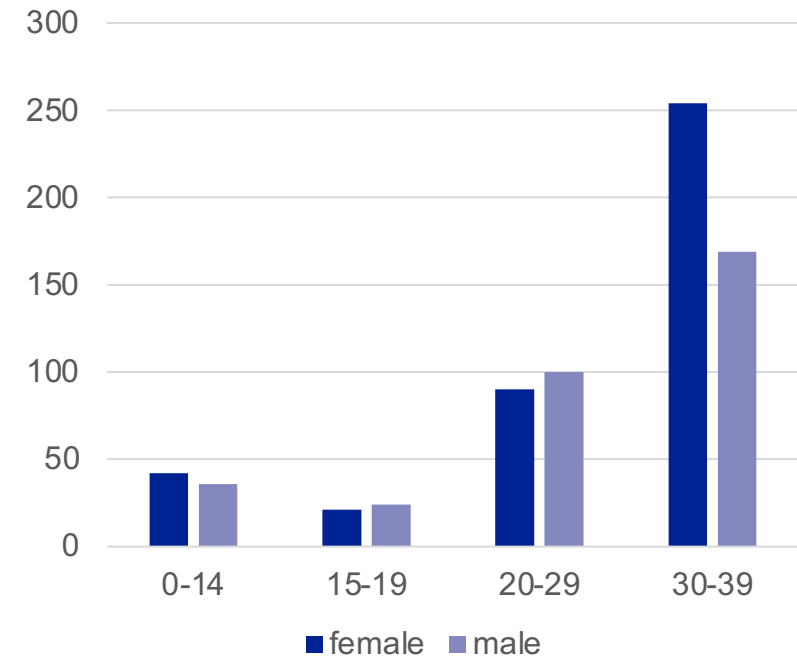
Where are AYA (specifically 16- to 18-year-olds) with cancer treated in Switzerland?

- Are there criteria for admitting AYA in paediatric or adult oncology? If so, which ones?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches?

2.1 Theoretical Background

- **AYA** = adolescents and young adults
 - Age range between 15 and 39 years
- Cancer in AYA is distinct from cancer in children or older adults
- AYA are at a **challenging time** in their lives
- Currently there is **no specific AYA oncology unit** in Switzerland
 - Yet this age group may have special needs

Number of new cases according to age, Switzerland 2015-2019



source: Bundesamt für Statistik
<<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/krankheiten/krebs.html>>



2.2 Legal Framework

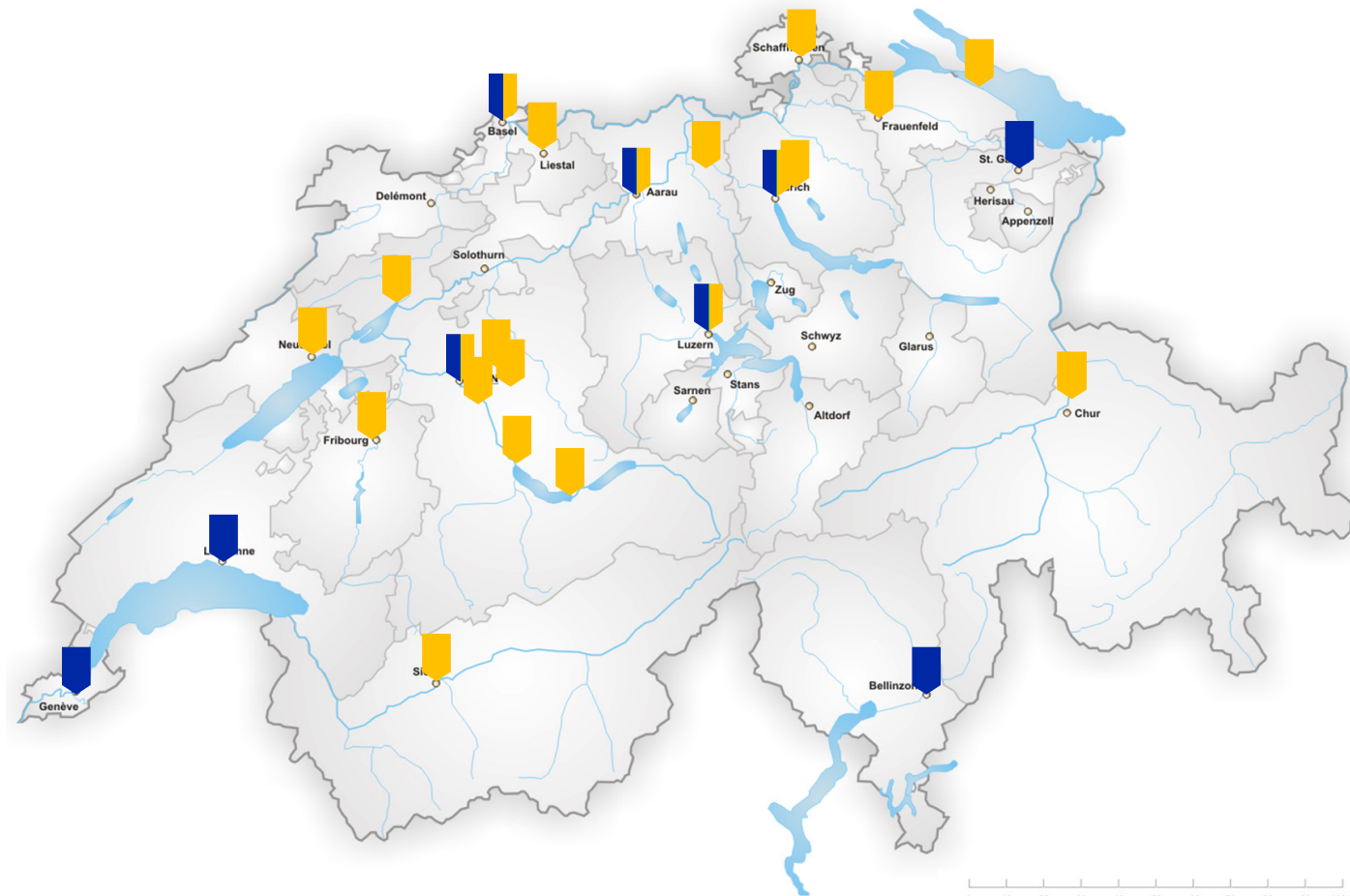
- Hospital supply in Switzerland: confederation and cantons
- Paediatric oncology as highly specialized medicine (HSM)
 - Definition of HSM (final report): *Medical areas and services that stand out from other diseases due to their small number of cases (**rarity**), high personnel or technical expenditure, complex treatment procedures or high innovation potential.*
 - In principle, treatment up to the age of 18 in paediatric oncology
- There are **no binding international guidelines** for the admission of AYA with cancer





3.1 Methodology: Expert Interviews

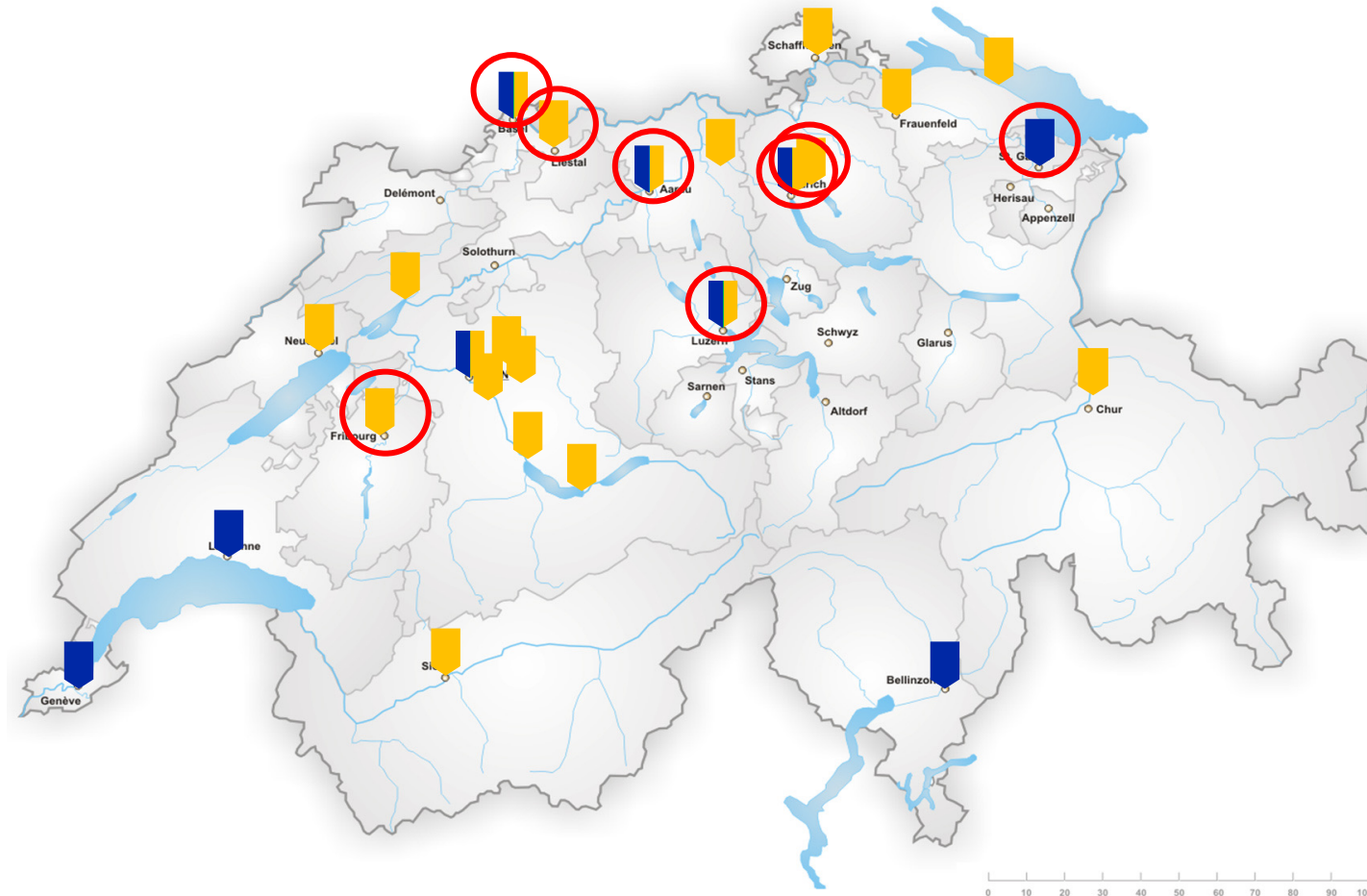
- Elaboration of **interview questions**
- Contacting **all nine paediatric oncology centres** in Switzerland
- Identify all hospitals in Switzerland with **oncology centres**, but no specifically paediatric oncology centres
- **Contacting** the identified hospitals that are on the FOPH (BAG) list “General hospital, centre care” (level 2)
- Conducting **interviews** with interested physicians
- Elaboration of the **results**

3.2 Selection of Hospitals



-  Paediatric oncology centres
-  Adult oncology centres

3.3 Conducted Interviews



Paediatric oncology centres:

- Universitätskinderspital beider Basel
- Ostschweizer Kinderspital St. Gallen
- Universitäts-Kinderklinik Zürich

Adult oncology centres:

- Freiburger Spital (HFR)
- Kantonsspital Baselland
- Kantonsspital Aarau
- Kantonsspital Winterthur
- Luzerner Kantonsspital



4. Interview Questions

- **Admission to the department:** Process of admission; Admission criteria
- **Age range of the patients:** Age range; Treatment of adults and/or minors
- **Transition between paediatric and adult oncology:** Process of transitioning; Post transition communication
- **Needs of AYA in cancer therapy:** Differences in personal and medical outcomes; Need for an AYA specialized institution; General special needs of AYA



5.1 Results

1. Admission to the department

- Usually by general practitioner or specialist
- Admission through transition talk or tumor board
- Individual consideration of each case is important

2. Age range of the treated patients

- Age as an artificial boundary
- Adult patients in the paediatric oncology
- Patients under 18 years in adult oncology



5.2 Results

3. Transition between paediatric and adult oncology

- Hardly any standard procedures for transitioning to adult oncology
- In some hospitals via tumor boards or transition talk
- Quality of communication between the different departments varies from hospital to hospital

4. Experience and needs of AYA

- All of the interview partners agreed that AYA have specific needs:
 - physiotherapy, rehabilitation, psychological needs, peer-groups, reproduction medicine, organisation of after care and special communication to the patient
- Some hospitals don't think that a special unit is profitable because of the rarity of cases
- There is a special AYA unit planned in Ostschweizer Kinderspital St. Gallen



6. Conclusion: Where are AYA with cancer treated in Switzerland?

- There is no unified practice or legal standard for the location of cancer treatment for AYA
- Due to HSM, AYA to the age of 18 should be treated in paediatric facilities
- Practice differs from hospital to hospital
 - each patient should be managed case by case
- Practitioners recognize that AYA have special needs
- Strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure optimal care for AYA



**Thank you very much for your
attention!**