

**TUMORI E PERDITA DEI CAPELLI: L'INNOVAZIONE  
PER MIGLIORARE IL BENESSERE PSICOLOGICO**



## **Cancer and hair loss: innovation to improve psychological well-being**

Press release

### **Chemotherapy-induced alopecia, an innovative prosthetic system improves life quality and psychological well-being of patients with cancer**

*Chemotherapy-induced alopecia (CIA) affects over 65% of cancer patients in chemotherapy treatments. Salute Donna Onlus and the National Cancer Institute of Milan present the first pilot study carried out to evaluate the aesthetic and psychological impact of the new CNC® prosthetic system, experienced by patients with recurrence of breast cancer and relapsing alopecia, who gave it a 10-points gap preference over traditional wigs.*

*An Italian innovative medical device, developed by CRLab, hand-made through a 39-step process, which can improve daily and social life of people with chemotherapy-induced alopecia.*

**Rome, 10 July 2020** - Not seeing yourself sick and feeling "as before", with an overall improvement in well-being and perceived body image over time, thanks to the use of an innovative prosthetic system instead of the traditional wig: an important turning point for women affected by chemotherapy-induced alopecia, who have to deal not only with their tumor pathology but also with the heavy psychological and social impact of hair loss.

Very positive results emerged from the study promoted by Salute Donna Onlus in collaboration with the National Cancer Institute of Milan, a pilot study to evaluate the psychological impact of the CNC® prosthetic system, 100% Italian, developed by CRLab - Cesare Ragazzi Laboratories, in patients with recurrence of breast cancer and recurrent alopecia induced by chemotherapy.

*"Salute Donna has always been committed to support women with cancer looking for the best possible solutions to improve their quality of life. We heard from several patients about a new type of aid for hair loss but CRLab has beaten us to the punch and contacted us. We were invited to the factory in Bologna where we realized the complicated manufacturing process that leads to the production of the CNC® prosthetic system - declares **Annamaria Mancuso**, President of Salute Donna Onlus - we immediately understood that it was a real innovation: we spoke with the National Cancer Institute about the importance of carrying a structured study on women with recurrent breast cancer and with a second chemotherapy-induced alopecia, therefore women who had already worn a traditional wig. The results are very good. This system could help women but also men and younger people affected by cancer. The next step will be to speak with regional decision makers to allow fair access to this system."* The National Cancer Institute of Milan has always been committed to scientific research not only to offer cancer patients the best facilities, cutting-edge technologies and innovative therapies but to ensure a global take on care aimed at improving their well-being and life quality.

"At the National Cancer Institute, we never lacked attention to the person, *patient at the center of attention* is not a way of saying, but a reality that has always been - comments **Marco Votta**, President of the IRCCS Foundation, National Cancer Institute of Milan – ours is a success story in

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a balanced mix of science and technology, but also of humanization of care, as taught by the giants of oncology who have exercised their activity here at the Institute, such as Gianni Buonadonna and Umberto Veronesi, the first to argue the importance of treating the person even before the disease. The choice to participate in this study must be interpreted under this light: cancer imposes great changes in personal life, choices, efforts, with a continuous face to face with the disease. For this reason, it is inevitable to lose personal and aesthetic perception leading to self-esteem and psychological balances reduction. We have been organizing make-up sessions at the Institute for years, last year there was also a fashion show with turbans, and today we are joining a pilot study that concerns prosthetic devices. The goal is to help our patients find again the desire to be women, to acquire security and determination in daily life and at work ".

The CNC<sup>®</sup> prosthetic system is a medical device, a highly customized hair prosthesis made in Italy that uses human, virgin, untreated hair, inserted one by one into a thin biocompatible polymer membrane patent covered. The production process, entirely handmade, includes 39 phases and the entire process is certified according to the ISO 9001: 2008 standard.

" After using our prosthetic system, few patients asked us to do more for the other women undergoing oncological treatments - explains Stefano Ospitali, CRLab's CEO - From here arose the idea to do a structured research, we also understood that we could help people who are suffering. Alleviate this suffering, even if only in part, is something beautiful and important, also under a company social responsibility perspective. Now we want to make this device accessible to a larger number of people. The study has given very encouraging results, it is worth making this solution as fairly reachable as possible ".

The CNC<sup>®</sup> prosthetic system is unique in its characteristics: resistant, performing and with antibacterial, antifungal and hypoallergenic properties.

The degree of satisfaction emerged from the study was high; both for the peculiarities of the device, which earns 10 points compared to the traditional wig (steady, perfect integration with the image, makes you feel "as before", undetectable, great hair quality, possibility to go to the hairdresser and not excessive management) and for the assistance (patience, dedication and competence of the CRLab professionals).

"Hair loss is the most important problem from a psychological point of view, we wanted to understand how to help women dealing with this problem - says **Claudia Borreani**, Head of the Clinical Psychology Structure, IRCCS Foundation National Cancer Institute of Milan – We chose to carry out a study to compare the two experiences: traditional wig versus CNC<sup>®</sup> prosthetic system. For this reason, we involved patients who had already experienced chemotherapy in the past, and who had used a wig. The goal was to evaluate the two solutions and of course we focused on the impact in the aesthetic aspect and in everyday life. Chemotherapy and its side effects are a complex experience, and we wanted to try this new prosthetic system offered for free and the results have been very promising ".

47% of women with cancer considers hair loss to be the most traumatic aspect of chemotherapy. Over 65% of treated patients suffers from chemotherapy-induced alopecia, due to the drugs toxicity for the hair follicles, the consequent appearance changes likely result in significant psychological effects.

"The prosthetic device made by CRLab allows to maintain a sense of continuity with your body image and despite the chemotherapy-induced alopecia, patients are not forced to deal with the disease every day - underlines **Alessandra Petruzzi**, Psychologist and Psychotherapist of Salute Donna Onlus - Preserving physical integrity with the help of such a cutting-edge device, gives patients the opportunity to not feel embarrassed on several occasions without limiting or avoiding social life. Hair loss is perhaps the most recognizable social stigma of cancer and the CNC<sup>®</sup> prosthetic system helps women to conceal their condition which is already the cause of so much discomfort and suffering. This is a concrete aid that alleviates the burden induced by oncological disease ".