The EHE Foundation (USA)
The EHE Rare Cancer Charity (UK)
The EHE Rare Cancer Foundation (Australia)
EHE Italia-Associazione Non Solo Laura ODV
EHE Canada

Quarterly Newsletter for the EHE Group
October – December 2024

the pledge

Edition 39

Contents

Welcome 1

Highlights 2

01 Patient Support and Advocacy 4

02 EHE Research 19

03 EHE Fundraising 30

04 And in other news 44

Front cover:

Baring all for EHE research see page 33 for more details.

Welcome

Welcome to our 39th edition of The Pledge, the quarterly newsletter of the EHE Group, where different aspects of the EHE Group's activities that took place during the fourth quarter of the year are described.

We think the progress being made is extraordinary for such a small community, and hope that you will find the stories courageous, enlightening, uplifting and inspiring. In every edition, we sincerely thank everybody who has supported The EHE Group, whatever form that support may have taken, and this quarter is no different. Thank you.
"Just Live".

Highlights

Michelle Lynn (Hughes) celebrates three years of Thrivership

Michelle reached her third year anniversary of her diagnosis and was proud to tell her story both through print and an amazing documentary, spreading awareness of EHE.

Patients 'tell their stories' in EHE Foundation campaign

The EHE Foundation brought together their Giving Tuesday matched-funding and their powerful EHE patients 'Tell Your Story' campaigns, together raising a staggering $183,737 for EHE research.

EHE is on the Agenda at CTOS

Denise Robinson was at the CTOS Annual Meeting in San Diego, representing the EHE Group and participating in group and one-on-one meetings where EHE was a topic of many conversations.

EHE Italia Associazione Non Solo Laura continues to grow

The profile of the newest of the EHE Group entities, EHE Italia Non Solo Laura, continues to grow with EHE awareness, fundraising and research participation all growing and well supported in Italy.

Research grants approved in the US and Europe

The EHE Foundation announced results of its 2024 call for research grants. The EHE Rare Cancer Charity announced new EHE Group combined research funding for the international collaborative research involving INT in Italy, ICR/RMH in the UK and Pro-Care in Canada.

Kym Wilkes and 'Team-Emma' drive awareness and fundraising

Kym Wilkes' twin sister, Emma, has EHE. Kym and all Emma's family and friends have combined in a high-profile campaign of both awareness and fundraising to support Emma and help drive EHE research. We particularly liked the 'nude' calendar they produced, also featured on our front cover.

Ultra-rare sarcoma discussions continuing

The EHE Group is continuing to support discussions with regulators about approval of sirolimus for EHE treatment, as well as participating in wider dialogue about how to improve drug approval for ultra-rare sarcomas.

Details on these stories, and much more, can be found in this edition

the pledge

Edition 39

Just live

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

In this section you will find updates on the The EHE Group's patient support and advocacy activities.

Most of the patient support is provided by patients themselves through the different EHE social media platforms, while advocacy activities are also undertaken by the EHE Group foundations in their respective regions. In both cases, the EHE community continues to work to create greater awareness of EHE, greater focus on the research we need to defeat this disease, and all necessary support for the patients themselves.

Michelle is spreading awarenes

The one-person EHE powerhouse that is Michelle Lynn (Hughes), was once again spreading awareness of EHE with another fantastic article telling her amazing story on the TODAY platform. This was a particularly poignant piece as it high-lighted Michelle's determination to beat the odds, three years after her cancer diagnosis!

> “After doctors gave her a grim prognosis for her Stage 4 cancer, Michelle Hughes decided to ***'Just Live.'*** She finished a triathlon on her 3rd cancerversary.”

Today Show
7 October 2024

After doctors gave her a grim prognosis for her Stage 4 cancer, Michelle Hughes decided to 'just live.' She finished a triathlon on her 3 cancerversary.

It really is an uplifting article about a young Mom who is determined to see her kids grow up, and is continually pushing the boundaries, refusing to let EHE define her or limit what she can achieve. Michelle simply decided to do everything in her power to be the person who thrives with this cancer.

The full story of her cancer journey, and her 3rd cancerversary, can be seen in the article **'My Journey Home** (in Michelle's own words)', later in this section of **The Pledge**.

Michelle has much more planned as she continues to build her platform. We wish her every success and thank her for all she does to raise awareness of EHE and funding for research into this horrible disease. Michelle, you really are a star!

For those who want to read the full article on the TODAY website, you can find it using this link:

Mom With Rare Cancer Supposed To Live For 3 Years Is Now Thriving. ■

What's your story?

The importance of patient stories is widely recognised as a very powerful tool to help spread awareness of a disease and to encourage support for the work being done to find treatments and cures. EHE is no different, and this quarter The EHE Foundation posted a number of videos of people telling their EHE stories. Maggie Cameron, Director of Development & Communications of The EHE Foundation explained when reaching out to the community for volunteers:.

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

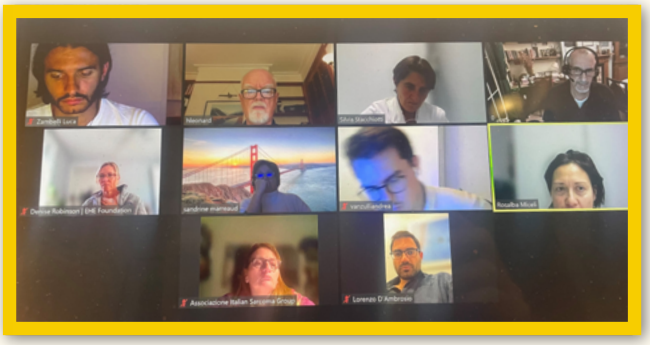
> “Your EHE stories have the power to inspire, inform, and make a difference. As patients, sharing your journey can help raise awareness for this rare cancer, connect with others facing similar challenges, and shine a light on the urgent need for research and treatments. Together, we can amplify the voice of the EHE community and drive change. Please share your story using the link below and help us spread #EHEawareness. Your voice matters!.”

‘Telling your story’ sounds simple, but it requires remarkable bravery to do this, exposing a very personal journey and emotions to public scrutiny. But our community once again met the challenge with a number of people participating. Their videos appeared through October and November and did indeed provide a moving testament to what living with EHE is like, through a powerful collective voice. Their videos can be found on The EHE Foundation Website at www.fightEHE.org

The EHE Foundation and **The Pledge** want to thank Maura, Tina, Lindsey, Kali, Cecilia, Michaela, and Stephanie for bravely telling their stories. You are all very special.

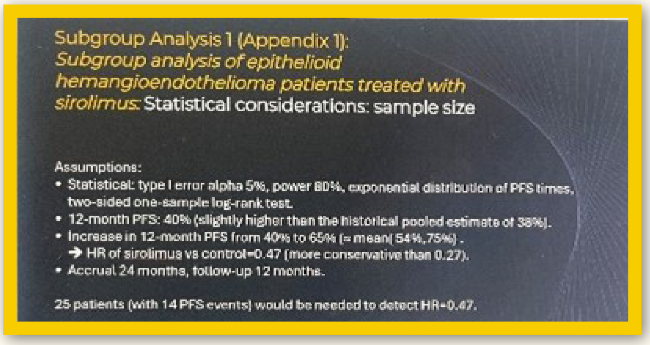
Sirolimus approval discussions are progressing

The EHE Group are continuing to work with the EMA in Europe and other regulators to try and obtain a marketing authorisation (MA) for sirolimus for the treatment of EHE. The group seeking the authorisation is led by Dr Silvia Stacchiotti, and includes clinical and research specialists from INT in Milan, Turin and other Italian centres. Sarcoma specialists including Prof Robin Jones from the UK and Dr William Tap from the USA, are also involved.



Hugh Leonard explained:

> “Getting a marketing authorisation approval will allow more EHE patients to have access to this important drug. This is necessary because, without formal regulatory approval, sirolimus is only available to patients if their doctor, hospital, health system, and/or insurance companies will allow off-label use. The only alternative may be to self-fund. As a result therefore, because of this off-label limitation, many of our patient community cannot access sirolimus simply because they cannot afford to self-fund it.”



Subgroup Analysis 1 (Appendix 1):
Subgroup analysis of epithelioid hemangioendothelioma patients treated with sirolimus: Statistical considerations: sample size

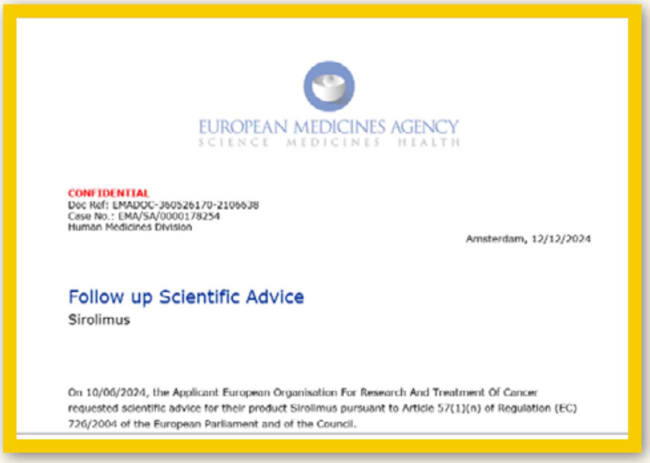
Assumptions:
- Statistical: type I error alpha 5%, power 80%, exponential distribution of PFS times, two-sided one-sample log-rank test.
- 12-month PFS: 40% (slightly higher than the historical pooled estimate of 38%).
- Increase in 12-month PFS from 40% to 65% (= mean(54%,75%) .
  ➔ HR of sirolimus vs control=0.47 (more conservative than 0.27).
- Accrual 24 months, follow-up 12 months.

25 patients (with 14 PFS events) would be needed to detect HR=0.47.

In the latest technical exchange with the EMA, known as Scientific Advice, the application team provided a further set of detailed questions to the regulator, seeking feedback as to whether their latest study proposal would be likely to meet regulatory requirements. Denise Robinson of the EHE Foundation noted:

> “Because EHE is so rare, many of the standard practices that regulators would expect an applicant to use in developing data to support a marketing authorisation application are just not possible. The whole group has therefore worked hard to develop a prospective study protocol which would generate data about the disease and the effect of sirolimus, in a manner that is as close as possible to those standard procedures. It has been a lot of work, but we think we are very close to an agreement on the way forward.”

The Scientific Advice response letter was received in mid-December. While it included a number of observations and identified concerns, the EMA did recognise the difficulties faced by such a rare disease and indicated that with some further small changes, the study protocol could be acceptable. Andrei Ivanescu of EHE Italia Non Solo Laura, the Italian EHE association, did however want to suggest a degree of caution:



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

CONFIDENTIAL
Doc Ref: EMADOC-360526170-2106638
Case No.: EMA/SA/0000178254
Human Medicines Division

Amsterdam, 12/12/2024

Follow up Scientific Advice
Sirolimus

On 10/06/2024, the Applicant European Organisation For Research And Treatment Of Cancer requested scientific advice for their product Sirolimus pursuant to Article 57(1)(n) of Regulation (EC) 726/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

> “This is exciting, and we hope that we will soon be able to start to actually gather data under the study protocol. However, we all have to realise that simply following the study protocol does not mean we will be automatically successful. Success of the study will of course be dependent on the actual results achieved. These actual results must in fact meet or exceed the target results that are included within the protocol itself and which define the outcomes that will be necessary to demonstrate an acceptable level of efficacy.”

Andrei, Denise and Hugh all agreed that while the outcome is not guaranteed, it is exciting to have what they believe is a workable study which will take us towards a marketing authorisation for sirolimus.

The Pledge wants to congratulate everybody that is involved in this process, and we very much look forward to reporting on the start of the study and its progress in future editions of the quarterly newsletter. ■

Meeting and greeting down under

As many of our readers will know, we are always delighted to report on members of the group getting together. It is a real privilege for directors of our foundations to have the chance to meet some patient members in person. One such director, and President of The EHE Rare Cancer Foundation Australia, is Jonathan Granek, himself an EHE patient.

So it was lovely to see posts in the fourth quarter of Jonathan meeting with Andrea Cohen Bresnick. Andrea summed it up very simply:

> “Embracing our ***“Just Live”*** motto- traveling in Australia. A Melbourne highlight- breakfast with Jono Granek!”

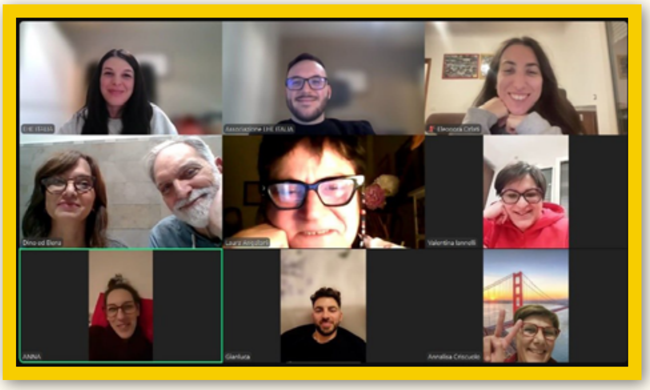
But it was not just Andrea that Jonathan had the pleasure to meet with. Jane Biddlecombe, a fellow founder and director of The EHE RCFA, explained:

> “What a fantastic way to start the day! A last minute trip to Melbourne meant I was lucky to catch up with my fellow Australian EHE Rare Cancer Foundation founding Director Jono Granek, whom I haven’t caught up with (in the flesh) for a few years now. We met as strangers 10 years ago and now it feels like we are family, which also gives me permission to boss him about haha.”

‘Meet and Greet’ with EHE ITALIA

On Thursday 16th December, EHE Italia held their second open meeting dedicated to EHE patients and caregivers, which left Caterina Colaci excited:

> “It was a wonderful moment of meeting between old friends and new participants, in which everyone had the opportunity to share their experience. We discussed the projects we would like to support in 2025 and underlined the importance of organizing more frequent meetings and receiving everyone's support.
>
> At the end of the meeting, we took some souvenir photos: one with everyone posing and another in which we show a big collective smile. We hope to continue on this path, enriching our journey with further meetings and new ideas. Thank you all for your participation and enthusiasm! ALONE we are RARE, TOGETHER we are STRONG!”



We love to see these meetings taking place, bringing patients and caregivers together through mutual support, empathy and compassion. Huge congratulations to the EHE Italia community for their participation. Together you are indeed strong!

EHE 360 Global Patient Conference is on the horizon

The EHE Foundation continues to post news about one of the most important events in the global EHE calendar. Maggie Cameron said:

> “Mark your calendars for Thursday, April 10th, and Friday, April 11th for The EHE Foundation's 2025 **EHE 360 Global Patient Conference,** where together, the EHE community will connect, explore, and learn. We will be issuing updates and information regularly about this important conference.”

In previous years, the EHE 360 conferences have brought expertise, knowledge, support, and so much hope to the EHE community. Multiple speakers, including clinical and research experts, provide both broad and expert exposure to many aspects of EHE. Every year, the closing ‘Ask the Experts’ Q&A session is particularly well received, with participants recognising it as a powerful highlight of the conference.

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

APRIL 10-11, 2025

THE EHE FOUNDATION PRESENTS

EHE 360

2025 GLOBAL PATIENT CONFERENCE

The EHE Group encourages everybody to register and participate in this important event. And for those who missed the 2024 EHE 360 conference, or would like to rewatch it, recordings can be found at The EHE Foundation's website at **https://fightehe.org/2024-ehe-360/**. Recordings from prior years are also available.

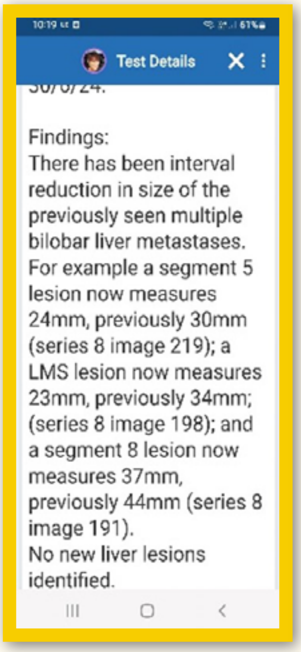
So keep those dates free! ■

Self-advocating for sirolimus

One of the most important facts that cancer patients need to accept, especially when dealing with ultra-rare cancers is that self-advocacy, the ability to communicate and project what you want your clinical care to look like, can be hugely important. Paula Mason, based in the UK, is an excellent example of why self-advocacy can be so beneficial. Paula explained:

> “I have tumors in my lungs, liver and spine. Since diagnosis in Jan 2022, all my tumors have been indolent, apart from 3 in my liver which have been continually growing (all be it slowly). I have been treated at a regional hospital, but recently had a consultation at the Royal Marsden Hospital. I told them that my consultants had always said that sirolimus was an option for later on but had not offered it to me, despite the continual growth of my 3 tumors.
>
> They got in touch with my oncologist and requested that I be given the opportunity to try sirolimus as soon as possible. After taking sirolimus for 3 months I had an MRI and a CT scan last week. I have attached the results here. You will see that the 3 troublesome tumors have actually shrunk quite considerably. I'm elated with this news and for any of you who are starting sirolimus, or thinking about asking your oncologist about it, I hope this gives you some hope.”

We hope that this story may help others facing a similar situation. We also want to thank Paula for sharing this story, and hope that these excellent results will continue. ■



Findings:
There has been interval reduction in size of the previously seen multiple bilobar liver metastases.
For example a segment 5 lesion now measures 24mm, previously 30mm (series 8 image 219); a LMS lesion now measures 23mm, previously 34mm; (series 8 image 198); and a segment 8 lesion now measures 37mm, previously 44mm (series 8 image 191).
No new liver lesions identified.

The 100 Squat challenge

Many of our EHE global community find ways to challenge themselves, and so follow the creed of ‘**Just Live**’. Some do it with meditation, some cycle, and some run. But in early November, Kim Alexander-Bird in the UK posted news that she had joined the Stand Up to Cancer 100 squat challenge:

> “Started my 100 squats a day challenge this month. Got my t-shirt today lol.”

We love the challenge and even more the photo. Keep going Kim, you’ll smash it! ■

My Journey Home (in Michelle’s own words)

“With all this heartache within our community members, I wanted to share some uplifting news with you all. Tomorrow my documentary, **“The Journey Home”** is premiering at a red carpet event.

“The Journey Home” is a celebration of my thrivership, of taking back a life once stolen by this incurable cancer. When I was diagnosed on August 20, 2021 my son was 3 weeks old, my girls were 5 and 2. They found innumerable lung and liver tumours, and cancer in my thigh and knee. The first oncologist, although treated one EHE patient previously, gave me 5 years to live, likely 3. His words, the prognosis, tried to break me; steal my joy, my motherhood journey.

We met our next oncologist, a sarcoma specialist, who said ***“just live”***; she’s who we went with and still see. I’ve had an up and down

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

journey with EHE, mostly up, thankfully, but I wanted to celebrate this 3 year cancerversary, and do something for myself, repave that long road that was full of such heartache. Over the last 3 years, every time I drove that route from the hospital to home, I'd feel anxious. It would remind me of when I left the ICU, was wheeled out of the hospital doors, and drove 1.5 hours to my home, where I had to tell my kids Momma had an incurable cancer.

Now that drive has been replaced with hope. On August 20, 2024 I ran out of those hospital doors, running 22kms, and then hopped on my bike and cycled 103kms, and jumped in the ocean, swimming 2kms to my beach where my children were waiting for me. A 6.5 hour commute that paved a new way.

I never exercised until cancer, and now I'm an endurance athlete. Hope. It's carried me far.

If anyone is interested in seeing this documentary, I've attached the ticketed link here. Although I pour my heart and soul into fundraising for EHE, I've dedicated this fundraiser to my passion project, Hope Happens Here; my fee-free women's wellness retreat for cancer survivors, thrivers and conquerors. I hope to open applications nationally and internationally soon!

Don't worry, we'll be back raising money for EHE research again real soon; with big plans for 2025!

Love and Hope friends,

We just need more time - our treatment plan is right around the corner

Michelle."

To watch Michelle's amazing story, go to https://www.myjourneytojustlive.com ■

The Academy of Kindness - a wonderful group

In late November, Andrei Ivanescu had the pleasure of meeting Alessandro Grazioli, President of Torre Gentile, arranged through the kind support of Gemma Gilardi, a friend and supporter of the association. Andrei explained:

"Together, we discussed kindness and how to integrate it into daily life, as well as talking about fragility. It was an honor to listen to and learn about Guido Stratta, president of the Academy of Kindness, and his inspiring speech on the subject. It also provided me with the privilege of introducing our Association, EHE Italia Non Solo Laura, to all those who participated in the event. It always makes me feel good when I get the chance to tell a group of people who know little or nothing about EHE, about this rare sarcoma." ■

Recognised by the CZI

The EHE Foundation was thrilled and proud in October to share the CZI (Chan Zuckerberg Initiative) Rare As One Impact Report highlighting The EHE Foundation as one of the 30 rare disease organizations in the 2020 inaugural cohort of grantees. Jenni Case Kovach explained:

> **“This innovative, incubator-style program was created to help build organizational and leadership capacity, optimize our work, and equip us to sustain ourselves and our research efforts well beyond the grant program. The EHE Foundation is grateful to have participated in this unique program, which harnesses the power of patient communities to improve care and quality of life and advance treatment development. This transformative experience has been instrumental to the growth and sustainability of the EHE Foundation for the benefit of everyone affected by EHE.”**

We want to send our congratulations to everybody at The EHE Foundation for all that they have achieved, and of course a huge thank you to CZI for selecting The EHE Foundation as one of that original cohort. Much has indeed been achieved as a result.

For those who want to see the report, there is a link on The EHE Foundation website: https://fightehe.org/foundation-partners/ ■

Australia promotes broader sarcoma support

EHE is a unique sarcoma, and for this reason, the EHE community understood that it needed to drive EHE-specific research and advocacy to benefit all EHE patients globally. However, there are general sarcoma-focused foundations and advocacy groups in most countries, and these can provide important information about generally dealing with a sarcoma diagnosis.

2024 Sarcoma Symposium

Friday 8 November 2024, 1pm to 5:30pm
Auditorium, Kerry Packer Education Centre, RPA Hospital

Time	Activity
1:00pm	**Registrations open**
1:15pm	**Welcome and introduction** Sydney Local Health District Executive Dr Richard Boyle, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Director RPA Bone and Soft Tissue Sarcoma Unit
1:20pm	**Session 1. Services for sarcoma – Chair Dr Maurice Guzman** **Update on action items from the 2023 Sarcoma Summit & next steps** Dr Richard Boyle, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Director RPA Bone and Soft Tissue Sarcoma Unit Dr Maurice Guzman, Orthopaedic Surgeon, RPA Bone and Soft Tissue Sarcoma Unit Dr Daniel Franks, Orthopaedic Surgeon, RPA Bone and Soft Tissue Sarcoma Unit **Genomics and tumor agnostic therapies as standard of care for sarcoma patients** Professor David Thomas, Chief of science and strategy, Omico, Centre for Molecular Oncology UNSW **Support for patients with sarcoma** Dr Riona Pais, Senior Staff Specialist, RPA Palliative Care Service **Video: Impact of a Clinical Nurse Consultant on the sarcoma patient journey** Aisling Byrne, Hannah Blyth, Hilary Myers **Introduction to the AYA hospice service** Tayla Yeates, Service Manager, Manly Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice **Cultural sensitivity around standard treatment protocols** Kylie Tarleton, proud Wiradjuri woman, Senior Manager Diversity & Inclusion TAFE NSW **Open forum discussion** Convened by Mitchell Rice Brading, Sarcoma Patient Support Advocate, Cooper Rice Brading Foundation
3:15pm	**Afternoon tea**
3:30pm	**Session 2. Research and Not For Profit organisations – Chair Dr Dan Franks** **Natural Killer (NK) Cell Therapy** A/Professor Fernando Guimaraes, University of Queensland **Inter-Ewing-1 trial in Australia** A/Professor Marianne Phillips, Paediatric Medical Oncologist, Perth Children's Hospital **CaSP SARC: a sarcoma research programme attached to the Australian Genomic Screening Programme** Dr Maya Kansara, Garvan Institute of Medical Research **Research updates for the service and future opportunities for sarcoma** A/Professor Daniel Steffens & Kate Alexander, Surgical Outcomes Research Centre (SOuRCe) **Genetic engineering of T-cells which are modified to produce structures (CARs)** Dr Cindy Li, Children's Medical Research Institute **Sarcoma patient support within the Rare Cancers Australia** Christine Cockburn, CEO, Rare Cancers Australia **Fireside chat** Rebecca Minty, Founder, Bricks and Smiles Mandy Basson, Executive Director, Sock it to Sarcoma!
5:30pm	**Close & networking event**

NSW
Sydney Local Health District

Jonathan Granek, President of The EHE Rare Cancer Foundation posted news of just such an event in November in Australia:

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

> “This Friday (8th November), from 1pm-5:30pm AEST, there is an online and in person event, ‘The 2024 Sarcoma Symposium’ at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. All patients and carers are welcome!”

We hope that some of our global EHE community, particularly those in the Asia-Pacific region, may have been able to participate, and found the symposia useful. ■

Leah Heinrich celebrates 5 years

We love it when people post positive stories, often around anniversaries of their EHE diagnosis. EHE champion, Leah Heinrich, did exactly that, celebrating her 5th anniversary.

> “Today marks 5 years living with EHE. I am so thankful for this group and The EHE Foundation and the connections and opportunities they’ve made possible. We are rare but together we are strong. I’m excited and hopeful for all the future has to offer with exciting research supported by the Foundation. Wishing all good things for everyone and their journeys.”

Congratulations Leah, and we look forward to celebrating many more anniversaries with you in the future. ■

The EHE Badges are in!

In mid-summer, Kym Snape asked the UK EHE Rare Cancer Charity in the UK if they had any lapel badges for the charity that she could give as a wedding favour to her wedding guests in October. This initiated a frenzy of ideas and designs within the EHE UK Social WhatsApp group. Sally Baker, Patient Trustee of the Charity explained:

> “We had been talking about doing this for ages and Kym’s request just galvanised us. We had some great designs, ultimately selecting one that incorporated the UK National EHE Biobank Logo. The circles define strength, while the red and yellow rings represent blood vessel. The intertwining of these rings is representative of the complexity of EHE, but also the strength and support of our global community, with arms around each other.”

Sadly due to a manufacturing error, we did not get the badges in time for Kym’s wedding, but we hope she and others will be able to share them. We hope that they will also be conversation starters, as Sally explained:

> “Because the design is bright and unusual, we like to think people will ask the wearer what the badge represents. Hugh wears his on his suit jacket and has already had several people ask. So we hope the badges will help spread awareness of EHE!” ■

Caregivers are so important

For obvious reasons, a lot of the work, information, and focus of the EHE Group and the EHE community is on patients, but the reality is that a cancer diagnosis will impact many other people other than the patients themselves. One particular such group is caregivers, those who take on the role of caring for a patient, often as a loved family member.

Julie Rivers Wahl posted news in October of an important event within the EHE Foundation's EHE Community Connections program, hosted by Allison Breininger, dealing with the important topic of 'Anticipatory Grief'. The session was only available to caregivers. Julie explained:

> **“This is such an important topic, dealing with a key issue for those caring for a loved one. The sessions are closed and not recorded, to give participants the greatest feeling of confidentiality and support as they discuss deeply emotional feelings. Although the subject matter can be difficult to talk about, Allison does a wonderful job of creating a warm and protective environment for the group. The session was excellent, and I think helped many who participated.”**

Similar sessions are planned for the future, so watch out for announcements. ■

A poignant reminder

Nicola Henderson lives in Yate, in the west of England. She and her family and friends have been unbelievable supporters of the UK Charity and the global fight against EHE. Nicola had progressive hepatic EHE and in 2019 underwent a liver transplant as her liver was close to failing due to the tumour burden.

As anybody who has undergone organ transplants will testify, the road to recovery is long and involves both physical and psychological challenges. Nicola has always spoken openly of her journey, usually to help those facing a similar situation.

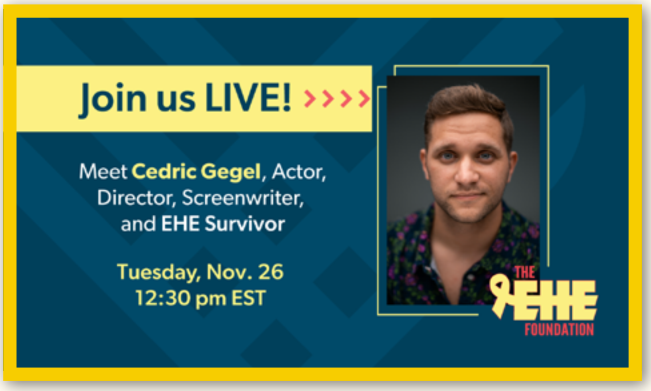
One message that Nicola often talks about is the incredibly strong bond she feels with her donor, even though she does not know the donor's name. It is a completely understandable sentiment, and this Christmas, Nicola shared a photo of her lovely new Christmas decoration that specifically recognises and honours that person, **“My Hero”**.

We love this Nicola, and that you never forget the person who helped you at your time of desperate need. We think that person and their family would be pleased that you are continuing to ***Just Live***, and that you continue to remember them so dearly. ■

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

Cedric Gegel, a class act

The EHE Foundation was delighted to present an opportunity for the EHE community to meet Cedric Gegel LIVE on Facebook on Tuesday, 26th November. Cedric is an actor, director, and screenwriter based in the New York City area. At twenty years old, Cedric was diagnosed with EHE in his left elbow. He underwent radiation therapy and several surgeries to combat the tumor. Damage from the treatment lingers and still impacts him today. Cedric's work and identity as a disabled artist have given him a unique perspective on life and art.



The live event was a huge success, with Cedric talking about his career and also his EHE, and how it has affected him. It was a hugely positive experience for all those who participated. We want to thank Cedric for agreeing to take part and for so openly sharing his experiences. ■

Remembering those who have left us

One of the things that our global community always wants to do is to remember those who left us far too early, of whom there are far too many. Kim Alexander-Bird posted news of just such an opportunity when she visited the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity's 'Ever After Garden' in Grosvenor Square in London.

The Ever After Garden is a tranquil haven where anyone can come to remember treasured friends and family they have lost, offering a space to pause and reflect over the festive period. Visitors are invited to dedicate a rose in memory of a loved one, whilst making a donation to The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, helping to fund groundbreaking research which improves the lives of cancer patients everywhere. ■

Our global community exceeds 3,000!

Jane Gutkovich was excited to announce in October that our global EHE community in the EHE Facebook Support Group had reached 3000!

> “Dear family! We just reached 3000 members!!! It is mind-blowing! I clearly remember the day when the 20th person joined the group. We all were "YAAAAAAY!!! We are not that rare anymore. Now we are 3000!! Not that we are happy of course that so many people have been diagnosed with EHE, but we are happy that so many people with EHE found this amazing resource for information and for unconditional support.”

But Jane wanted to remind everybody that it is not just about numbers:

> “We are also a huge force in pushing forward our quest to find cures for EHE. We are funding EHE research, collecting EHE data, educating the medical community through our shared experiences. We keep hope for so many patients and their loved ones and we all share profound grief for people who lost their battle with this horrible disease. So let's hold on to our ever-growing EHE family! Sending love and warmest wishes to you all!”

The Pledge wholeheartedly agrees with you, Jane. And wow, by year-end the number had risen further to 3013!! ■

Clinical trials and the cost challenge

For many patients, being accepted to a clinical trial is a potentially significant step forward. However, this often comes with a major challenge, namely the cost for the patient of getting to and taking part in the trial. Maggie Cameron from the EHE Foundation was therefore pleased to post news again of the Sarcoma Foundation of America’s financial support program.

> “Hey there, in case any of you are incurring clinical-trial-related expenses, Jordan's Dream Fund may be able to help. The next application deadline is December 9th!”

The Sarcoma Foundation of America sponsors Jordan’s Dream Fund for Clinical Trials to help sarcoma patients with direct expenses related to transportation (airfare, gas, rental cars, taxi fare, parking/tolls), and lodging.

While the latest deadline has now passed (it was 9th December), there will be future application deadlines. Please continue to monitor the SFA website for future information. ■

01 Patient Support and Advocacy

A new study from China

The EHE Group continues to watch out for any new publications about EHE. Jane Gutkovich posted news of one such paper that had emanated from China:

> “Here is a new study of 228 patients with hepatic EHE from China. The study showed what has been reported before (for example, worse prognosis in patients with poor liver function or presence of fluid around the liver) but it also contradicted some previous large studies (for example, this study found that surgical treatment (including liver transplant) does not provide a better outcome than no-surgical treatments. But digging deep into the study, you can see that:
>
> a) there were only 8 patients with liver transplant, with 2 of them (25%) not surviving 3 years post-transplant;
>
> b) there is not much detail specifically about what kind of patients underwent the transplantation. It is very possible that these were people with quite advanced EHE, which means that they may not be comparing ‘apples to apples’; and
>
> c) while 25% having less than 3 year mortality sounds scary, it is only 2 patients! However, the authors suggest that the role of liver transplantation should be re-evaluated.
>
> We know that the transplant is very successful in many of our members. We also know that some hidden characteristics of EHE (aggressiveness, metastatic potential) probably influence the outcome, We just DON'T know exactly what these characteristics are and so we must push EHE research to identify and understand them.”

We thank Jane for bringing another interesting paper to the community and for sharing the link to the study below. Jane as always is happy to discuss any aspects of the paper and invites people to reach out to her if they want to.

https://bmccancer.biomedcentral.com/articles/ ■

02

In this section you will find stories and information relating to EHE research and understanding, most of it supported by our global patient community, and funded by the EHE Group entities.

It is this research that will ultimately help the EHE Group find new ways to treat and manage EHE. We hope you will be inspired by the work taking place and the dedication and skill of the researchers that are delivering it.

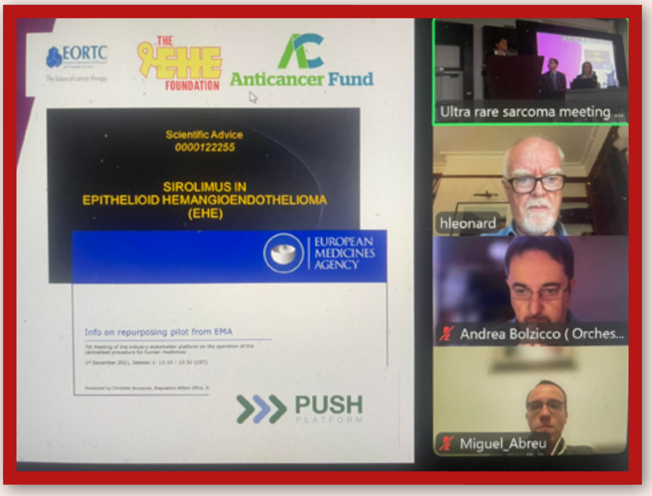
02 EHE Research

Highlights from CTOS 2024

In November, Denise Robinson, Executive Director and Director of Research attended the CTOS 2024 Annual Meeting in San Diego, California. The Connective Tissue Oncology Society (CTOS), is a professional medical organization that brings together multi-disciplinary clinician-scientists, translational researchers, and advocates from all over the world to advance the treatment of sarcomas. Many of the world's leading experts on EHE were on hand. Here are some highlights:

The **Ultra-rare Sarcoma Working Group** (URSWG) meeting was kicked off by Drs. Silvia Stacchiotti (INT, Milan) and Bill Tap (MSKCC, New York) to share progress and opportunities of the PUSH Project (**P**ushing **U**ltra-Rare **S**arcomas beyond **H**ope). This important initiative aims to accelerate ultra-rare sarcoma treatment discovery and is supported by EHE advocates, Hugh Leonard (EHERCC) and Denise Robinson (EHEF). Hugh was not able to join Denise at CTOS but participated in the URSWG meeting remotely and posted a real-time message for the EHE community:

> **“The CTOS meeting of ultra-rare sarcomas working group is underway. Wonderful to see EHE being a core part of the presentations. Also wonderful to see Dr Stacchiotti presenting and talking about EHE, and our own Denise Robinson chairing the session. *Just live!*”**

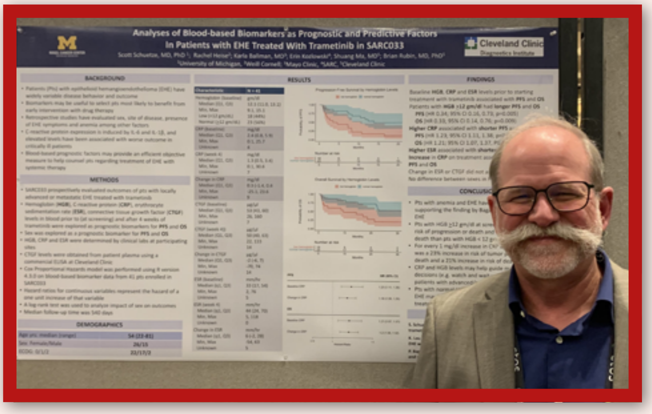


Scientific Advice
0000122255

SIROLIMUS IN
EPITHELIOID HEMANGIOENDOTHELIOMA
(EHE)

Info on repurposing pilot from EMA

Dr. Scott Schuetze, University of Michigan, presented a poster expanding on data shared from the Phase 2 trametinib study in patients with EHE (Clin Cancer Res (2024)). Dr. Schuetze's poster entitled, **'Analysis of Blood-Based Biomarkers as Prognostic Factors in Patients with EHE Treated with Trametinib in SARC033'**, concluded that patients with locally advanced or metastatic EHE who had lower hemoglobin (HGB) or higher C-reactive protein (CRP) values prior to treatment had a higher risk of more rapid disease progression and shorter survival duration. The researchers concluded that hemoglobin and CRP values may be useful prognostic biomarkers to inform treatment.



We are grateful to Dr. Schuetze, Dr. Brian Rubin (Cleveland Clinic), and everyone who contributed to this body of work. We are especially grateful to the patients who participated in this research. The EHE Group also helped with funding of this trial, as the EHE Rare Cancer Charity funded pre and post trial biopsies of patients.

Andrea Vanzulli, MD, Resident physician in diagnostic and interventional radiology at the Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori, Milan, Italy presented an oral abstract entitled, 'Redefining Radiologic Responses in Epithelioid Hemangioendothelioma: Beyond RECIST?'. Based on a retrospective study of patients with aggressive EHE who had serosal involvement or systemic symptoms, Dr. Vanzulli and colleagues concluded that RECIST 1.1 did not identify clinical progression in up to 67% of patients with EHE-related serosal involvement. Experts have proposed new criteria for evaluation which would take into account serosal involvement, and potentially yield more accurate detection of EHE progression.

The **Sarcoma Patient Advocacy Global Network** (SPAGN) graciously hosted an inviting area for patient advocates to meet, network, and sometimes simply rest during the busy week. Importantly for EHE, they provide a forum for sharing the Foundation's work with the global sarcoma community. Their important work highlighted at CTOS shared preliminary data from their *Global Insights on Sarcoma Diagnosis: Preliminary Findings from SPAGN's Survey*.

These preliminary findings highlight the complex and sometimes lengthy journeys patients navigate to get an accurate diagnosis. We are grateful for their support, advocacy, and inclusivity of all sarcoma patients, no matter where in the world you live.

Denise wanted to close with a heartfelt message of thanks:

> **“It is always an honor to be in the presence of so many passionate doctors, scientists, and fellow advocates, who are all truly dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by sarcoma. We are grateful to the professional experts who give countless hours to the EHE community.”** ■

02 EHE Research

Research Discovers Potential Biomarker for EHE

The EHE Group congratulated Silvia Stacchiotti, MD; Sandro Pasquali, MD; Nadia Zaffaroni, PhD; and their colleagues at Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori (INT), Milan for their recent publication in Clinical Cancer Research, **"GDF-15 predicts epithelioid hemangioendothelioma aggressiveness and is down-regulated by sirolimus through ATF4/ATF5 suppression"**, a project partially funded by The EHE Foundation and The EHE Rare Cancer Charity.

Results of this groundbreaking research show that:

a) In the two models used, a patient-derived xenograft (PDX) and paired EHE cell line, EHE cells produce and release growth differentiation factor-15 (GDF-15). GDF-15 is a cytokine that cancer cells produce and is used as a biomarker for the severity of many diseases.

b) These results indicate that GDF-15 could be a useful novel biomarker to predict EHE aggressiveness and disease progression.

c) In the EHE models used, sirolimus was shown to reduce GDF-15 expression.

d) Additionally, sirolimus (not approved for EHE) had a higher anti-tumor activity than doxorubicin (approved for soft tissue sarcoma) when compared in the model systems.

For EHE patients, these findings give hope for further preclinical drug development using human-derived EHE models, better-informed treatment decisions, and the ability to monitor disease progression, all with the goal of improving patient outcomes. The EHE Group is grateful to the research team at INT and their colleagues for this publication and their commitment to EHE research.

2024 Grant Funding Announced

The EHE Foundation was pleased to announce their 2024 Research Grants Program awards, totaling $307,400, to advance their mission to find effective treatments and a cure for EHE. Made possible by generous donations and gifts to The EHE Foundation, these grants support novel translational research projects that aim to identify and accelerate the development of potential therapies for EHE. With the guidance of The Foundation's dedicated Research Committee, Scientific and Medical Advisory Board, and invited expert reviewers, the following research grants were awarded:

Evaluation of druggable targets for the treatment of aggressive metastatic EHE

Ajay Pobbati, PhD | Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Project Summary:
Patients with aggressive epithelioid hemangioendothelioma (EHE), especially those whose cancer has spread, do not have effective treatment options. This project focuses on finding drugs that could slow or stop the spread of aggressive EHE.

This research builds on significant efforts by this lab to identify drugs that can reduce the disease burden of EHE. The scientists have previously reported their discovery of a protein called Cdk9, important for the stability of TAZ-CAMTA1 (TC), a fusion protein that causes EHE. In this expansion project, Cdk9 inhibitors, including those already FDA-approved, will be evaluated and prioritized based on their ability to destabilize TC. The top Cdk9i candidates will be evaluated in vitro and in vivo, to identify a drug most suitable for a clinical trial of patients with aggressive, metastatic EHE.

Ultimately, this project aims to find a drug that can improve patient outcomes by repurposing a drug that can reduce EHE metastasis.

Combination therapy targeting genomic and signal transduction vulnerabilities in epithelioid hemangioendothelioma

Gillian DeWane, PhD | University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine

Project Summary:
EHE is caused by specific fusion proteins: TAZ-CAMTA1 and YAP-TFE3. These fusion proteins bypass regulation by the Hippo pathway and act as important transcriptional coactivators by activating a TEAD-based transcriptional program responsible for activating genes in several downstream pathways, including the PI3K pathway. Using cells engineered to express the YAP-TFE3 fusion protein, this lab has identified topoisomerase II as a therapeutic vulnerability in EHE and has further found that it is a key transcriptional cofactor for the TAZ-CAMTA1 and YAP-TFE3 fusion proteins.

This translational science project will investigate low concentrations of topoisomerase II inhibitors to enhance combination therapy targeting the PI3K-Akt axis and TEAD binding of the TAZ-CAMTA1 and YAP-TFE3 transcription factors.

Significant for people with aggressive EHE, this project could identify a combination treatment approach for further investigation in people with EHE.

Characterizing cell-penetrating peptide entry into EHE

Tohru Yamada, PhD | University of Illinois at Chicago.

Project Summary:
The most common genetic signature for approximately 90% of all EHE cases is a WWTR1(TAZ)-CAMTA1 gene fusion. In about 50% of these, a secondary loss of tumor suppressor CDKN2A activity is associated with more aggressive disease. The CDKN2A gene encodes two important tumor suppressors, the CDK4/6 inhibitor p16ink4a and p14arf which activates p53. Therefore, mutation of CDKN2A activates tumor cell growth in part by inhibiting p53 activity, an important protein that normally stops tumors from growing. Therefore, reactivating p53 in EHE cells with CDKN2A mutation could reduce tumor cell proliferation and present an excellent opportunity for clinical intervention.

This project aims to investigate if a safe cell-penetrating peptide, p28, which is preferentially taken up by many cancer cells, can stabilize p53 in EHE cells with CDKN2A mutation. The scientists hypothesize this should reduce the growth potential of these more aggressive EHE cells.

Importantly for patients, this early-stage translational science provides a novel strategy to attack EHE and could lead to new treatments that improve outcomes for people living with EHE.

Denise Robinson said:

> **“The EHE Foundation thanks the donors who so generously give to fund impactful EHE research, our dedicated Research Committee, the Scientific and Medical Advisory Board, and invited expert reviewers for their time, as well as EHE patients and families whose participation makes this and other research possible. We could not do any of this without you all.”**

The Pledge wants to add its thanks to all these people who all contribute so much, and without whom there would be little or no EHE research taking place. We also want to thank The EHE Foundation’s team for their fantastic planning, promotion, drive, and dedication to the delivery of the funding campaigns, grant cycles, and contract awards that bring everything together and ultimately deliver EHE research in labs. ■

02 EHE Research

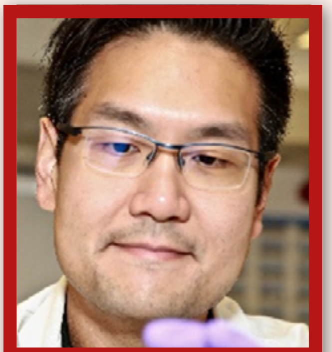
European Research Funding Extended

As many of our readers are aware, the EHERCC and The EHE Foundation have been jointly funding ongoing collaborative research between Italy and the UK. The projects involve the Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori (INT) in Milan and the Royal Marsden Hospital (RMH) and Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) in London. This research involves a number of projects including identifying EHE biomarkers, seeking to develop new PDX models, drug screening, and building a broad radiography library to allow experts to examine EHE images in detail with the hope of identifying new diagnostic and prognostic features. This research is led by Professor Robin Jones and Dr Paul Huang in London, Dr Stacchiotti and Dr Pasquali in Italy.


Dr Stachiotti


Dr Pasquali


Professor Jones


Dr Huang

Critically, in addition to the lab-based work, a key component of the project was the creation of a clinical observational study in to which INT and RHM have enrolled over 50 EHE patients so far. Each patient is being treated under a standard protocol, creating a significant, high quality study of the disease which will inform ongoing thinking regarding EHE research and treatment. This observational study has now also become a fundamental component of the ongoing work with regulators to have sirolimus approved for the treatment of EHE. With agreed modifications to the original protocol and increased verification of protocol compliance, the study will now become a prospective observational study. It is also hoped that this new study may be joined by other institutions from around the globe.

The original proposal from the research group was for a three year research project. It was agreed however that the EHE Group would commit to fund the initial two years and review funding of the third year based on the results of the first two years.

The research work and results already achieved and the importance of the observational study, as shown by its application, with appropriate amendments, to the sirolimus approval programme, were summarised by the research team at the end of the second year. That detailed summary was at the core of the EHE Group's assessment, leading to The EHE Foundation and The EHE Rare Cancer Charity agreeing to jointly fund the third year of the project.

In addition to the third year of the project, the research team also submitted a proposed work scope and budget amendment to enable continuation and expansion of the observational study, increasing its target cohort from 50 to 100+ patients, and its duration to the end of 2027. This will allow data to be collected for a larger group over a longer period, enabling us to develop a better and more accurate understanding of the disease.

Hugh Leonard commented:

> “The work and progress made has been exceptional and we are so grateful to the whole research team for their ongoing dedication and focus on EHE. We had no hesitation in approving the third year of this excellent project, and remain excited by its potential.”

Denise Robinson continued:


Dr Razak

> “We are excited by the development of the observational study into a prospective observational study with the result that a sub-set of the patients who are prescribed sirolimus can be used to support the work we are doing to seek approval for this drug from regulators. Now we have to work hard to introduce the study to other institutions and hopefully get them to join this important work. We are very encouraged and grateful to the PRO-CARE team in Canada, led by Dr Razak, who have already expressed significant interest in joining the study. We will soon be talking to others.”

But it is not only the institutions that are growing in number. EHE Italia Non Solo Laura, the EHE association in Italy, will also now be contributing to the funding of this work. Andrei Ivanescu was excited:

> “We are the newest of the EHE Group entities and are just at the start of our fundraising and operational organisation; but thanks to great support from our community in Italy, we are now able to contribute to these important projects. We will be working very hard of course to raise further funds in the future, but EHE Italia is thrilled to already be in a position to contribute to these important projects.”

At **The Pledge**, we want to congratulate the researchers for their fantastic work; the EHE Group for their dedication and focus to ensure that these projects continue; and of course the EHE global support community whose extraordinary focus and generosity to so many different fundraising programmes ultimately delivers the funds that are needed for this critical work. ■

02 EHE Research

Zebrafish research suspended

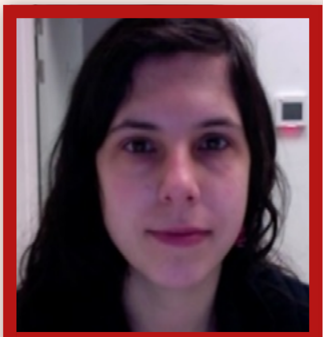
In 2018, The EHE Rare Cancer Charity (EHERCC) initiated research at the Bateson Centre at the University of Sheffield. The Bateson Centre is one of the largest and oldest zebrafish facilities in Europe, and are experts in developing models of human diseases in zebrafish. Zebrafish are used because they are cheap and quick to produce, if you are successful in creating the model you want. They are also largely transparent making it easy to see morphological changes as the fish develops.

The primary reason for initiating this research project, seeking to develop a zebrafish model of EHE, was the complete lack of any viable EHE models of any kind. In 2018 there were no PDX mouse models, no PDX-related cell lines, no genetically-engineered mouse (GEM) models, and no human cell lines. Work was underway in these different areas, but with no guarantees of success with any specific model, the continuation of work on all models was essential.

Hugh Leonard explained:

> “We understood that creating a zebrafish model would be a challenge, but when we started all EHE models were proving to be very difficult to establish, so we did not have the luxury of ignoring any potential option.”

Dr Fredericus van Eeden



Eleanor Markham

The team at the Bateson Centre was led by Dr Fredericus van Eeden, with Eleanor Markham undertaking most of the painstaking technical work. Over the following five years, the team introduced the gene translocation constructs into the fish, requiring an unbelievable attention to detail to ensure the constructs were located in the right place. Many challenges were faced, but each time the team found solutions that allowed them to move on. This included introducing a switching mechanism into the fish so that the gene translocation constructs could be turned on, as they appeared to be fatal at the embryonic stage of the fish. Multiple variations of the construct were tried, with minute adjustments made to its structure and positioning in the fish.

Ultimately the team were able to create EHE fish with switchable mechanisms for both the TAZ-CAMTA1 and YAP-TFE3 variations of the disease. However, while the gene translocations could be turned on, and low levels of the fusion proteins appeared to be present, they were in very small quantities, making the fish unviable as EHE models.

Hugh continued:

> “While our zebrafish remained stubbornly resistant to producing a viable EHE model, model developments were progressing in other areas. Dr Brian Rubin was finally able to get his GEM to work, creating an unbelievably robust model for all presentations of the disease. Cell lines soon followed. At the same time, Dr Silvia Stacchiotti and the team at INT in Milan created the first viable EHE PDX mouse model from a patient tissue sample. This also led to a further cell line. More recently we are seeing exciting progress with human cell lines in the US. With all this excellent model progress elsewhere, we had to face the fact that the zebrafish were now not so critical.”

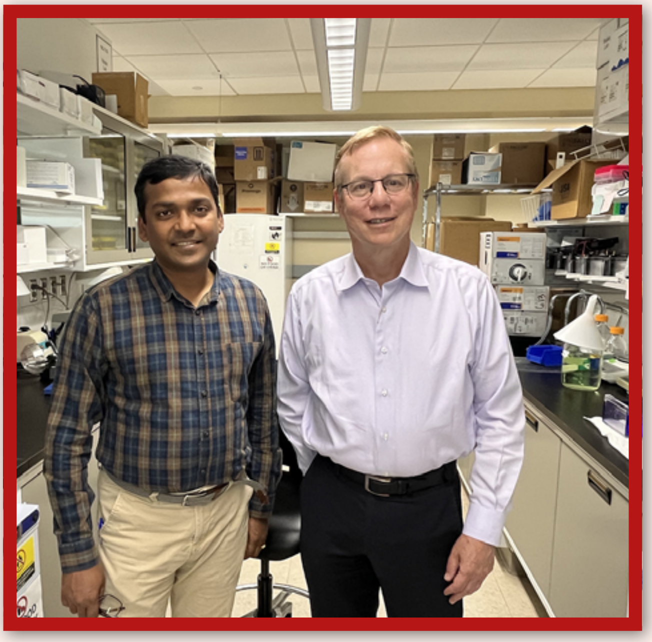
The decision was therefore taken in August 2024 to suspend the research project. All the work completed has been carefully documented, and any important constructs stored. In the final 6 months the team also investigated if EHE cells could be injected into zebrafish and kept alive, as a xenotransplantation model. These xenotransplant fish provide a life support system for the EHE cells which might then be exposed to treatment drugs. However, this will be a possible future development, should the use of such xenotransplant fish become important.

Hugh concluded:

> “It was so frustrating for the team to get so close to creating a viable model. But with the brilliant model progress seen elsewhere, we could not justify committing more funds to the zebrafish project. We do however want to say a massive thank you to both Dr van Eeden and to Eleanor Markham for their skill, knowledge, dedication and tenacity. It still blows my mind what they were able to do with these tiny fish. And who knows, perhaps we will come back to them in the future to re-engage around the xenotransplant model.” ■

02 EHE Research

Rubin Lab at Cleveland Clinic Continues to Advance EHE Research



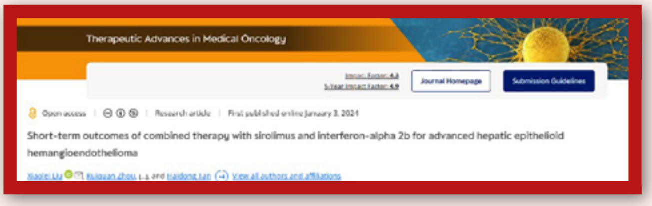
The EHE Group congratulated Ajay Pobbati, PhD; Brian Rubin, MD, PhD; and their colleagues at the Cleveland Clinic for the publication of their findings from the study ***"CDK9 inhibition by dinaciclib is a therapeutic vulnerability in epithelioid hemangioendothelioma"*** which was funded in part by a grant from The EHE Foundation. This body of work was made possible by an initial small seed grant to explore FDA-approved drugs that could treat aggressive EHE. This project is an excellent model for how Foundation grants accelerate the discovery of new treatments for EHE. Read more on the Foundation blog at:

https://fightehe.org/harnessing-cyclin-dependent-kinase/ ■

Combination therapies look interesting

Tyler Davis, a UK EHE patient, shared a link to a paper summarising the short term outcomes of combined therapy with sirolimus and interferon-alpha 2b (SI) for advanced hepatic epithelioid hemangioendothelioma, published in Sage Journals in January 2024. The study included 29 patients with advance hepatic EHE. The full paper can be accessed through this link:

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17588359231220509



Therapeutic Advances in Medical Oncology

Impact Factor: 4.3
5-Year Impact Factor: 4.9

Open access | Research article | First published online January 3, 2024

Short-term outcomes of combined therapy with sirolimus and interferon-alpha 2b for advanced hepatic epithelioid hemangioendothelioma

View all authors and affiliations

This study is of a small group, and there are several questions that arise from the paper, but initial results look encouraging. For example:

- Twenty-three (79.3%) patients showed a decrease in tumor size, including 11 (37.9%) patients who achieved a partial response and one (3.4%) who achieved a complete response; the objective response rate was 41.4%.
- Stable disease was observed in 13 (44.8%) patients, with a disease control rate of 86.2%.
- Adverse events (AES) were observed in 18 patients, including leukopenia (31.0%), oral ulcers (13.8%), and liver injury (10.3%). No severe (grade 3) AEs were recorded, and SI therapy was not interrupted for any patient due to AEs.

The authors concluded that sirolimus and interferon-alpha 2b may have synergistic effects in the treatment of hepatic EHE. SI therapy is a safe and effective treatment for hepatic EHE patients with good ECOG performance status. The ECOG Performance Status Scale describes a patient's level of functioning in terms of their ability to care for themself, daily activity, and physical ability (walking, working, etc.), providing standard criteria for measuring how the disease impacts a patient's daily living abilities, and also how these may or may not be affected by a specific treatment.

The EHE Group will continue to review such results with their respective Advisory Boards as one component of their wider evaluation and search for improved treatments for EHE. ■

Tissue donation is so easy!

Participating in EHE research is critical for progress and it's easier than you think! If you live in the United States and are having a tumor removed, contact biobank@fightehe.org before any procedure or surgery.

The EHE Biobank team will make the arrangements with your hospital. Visit The EHE Foundation website to learn more. ■

03 EHE Fundraising

Fundraising is the lifeblood of all not-for-profit organisations without which other activities could not take place.

It is for this reason that we are especially grateful for the amazing effort, organisation and generosity that have all been required to enable us to raise the funds and drive EHE research. Here are highlights of some of the fundraising undertaken by our supporters. Whether you are a fundraiser, a donor, or a supporter, we want you to know that we are deeply grateful for all you have done.

Giving is easy in Canada

With Giving Tuesday approaching Fiona Ross wanted to reach out to Canadians who might like to donate to EHE-focused research funding in Canada. She explained how simple this is to do:

> “We don't have a dedicated EHE foundation in Canada, but we do work with the Sarcoma Cancer Foundation of Canada who will receive donations specifically for EHE research. The link for donating is **http://sarcomacancer.ca/donate**. HOWEVER, please note my name Fiona Ross, or Michelle Hughes, and put EHE in the message to ensure your donations go to EHE, otherwise it will go to general revenue. If you wish, you can also etransfer to me at **fightehecanada@gmail.com** and I will submit to the SCFC. This way it will definitely go to EHE and save the online commission cost. Just make sure you put your address in another email so I can get you the tax receipt. Thank you and best of the holiday season to all who celebrate!”

We want to once again congratulate Fiona for establishing this important relationship with the SCFC that makes it possible for Canadians to donate to EHE research. We also want to say a huge thank you to everybody who has donated through the SCFC, helping to support EHE research. ■

Christmas fundraiser launched

Associazione
per lo studio e la ricerca
dell'Emangioendotelioma
Epitelioide - Tumore Raro

✨ Un gesto di cuore per Natale ✨

Natale 2024 - Regala una speranza!

Associazione EHE Italia - Non Solo Laura ODV

In questo periodo di festa, ci auguriamo che tu possa contribuire a sostenere la nostra Associazione EHE Italia - Non Solo Laura ODV. Puoi farlo con una donazione o condividendo questa raccolta fondi con chiunque sia disposto ad aiutare. Ogni piccolo gesto è prezioso e può fare una grande differenza.

Grazie di cuore per il Tuo supporto!

Clicca qui sotto per fare la Tua donazione PayPal:

Natale 2024 - regala una speranza!

EHE Italia Non Solo Laura were thrilled to report that one of their associates had launched a PayPal fundraising campaign for Christmas 2024 to support their cause. Andrei Ivanescu explained:

> “Thanks to this kind gesture and 40 other donors who participated, the Association was able to raise €2,160. We are so grateful for the solidarity these people show us every day. It is acts of kindness like this that help us to raise the funds that are so badly needed for EHE research and allow us to contribute to global EHE research together with the other EHE foundations that have been established” ■

03 EHE Fundraising

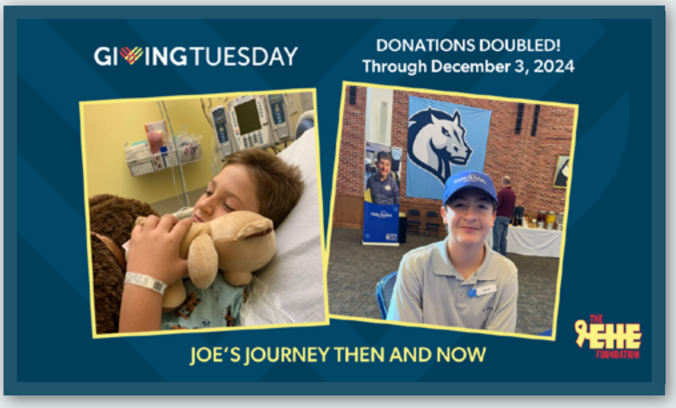
Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday has become a hugely significant day in The EHE Foundation's calendar. This is the day when matched funding is offered to encourage supporters to donate in support of EHE research. Jenni Case Covach, President of The EHE Foundation, explained as she launched the 2024 program:

> “I give because I want to find treatment for myself and everyone in this community. I don't want to lose one more precious life to EHE. The EHE Foundation just granted $307,000 to EHE research in 2024. Things are happening, we have momentum. Let's keep it going!

Shortly after Jenni's starting-gun post, Maggie Cameron provided more details;

> “DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT! Now until Tuesday, December 3rd, every donation to The EHE Foundation will be matched up to a total of $80,000, thanks to the generosity of our Board of Directors. Every dollar you give makes twice the impact in the fight against epithelioid hemangioendothelioma (EHE).
>
> Help us reach $80,000 in community donations! When matched, we'll unlock a total of $160,000 to fund vital EHE research. With your help, we can make a real difference in the fight against this one-in-a-million rare cancer.”



Maggie continued:

> “Every dollar you give during our Giving Tuesday campaign directly supports The EHE Foundation's research programs, funding vital efforts that bring hope to those living with EHE. Your generous single or recurring donation accelerates groundbreaking progress and brings life-changing treatments closer to reality. Let's join forces to make this Giving Tuesday our most impactful yet. Together, we can fuel hope, drive research, and improve the lives of everyone affected by EHE.”

Once again, The EHE Foundation supporters stepped up to the plate, and with matching raised an amazing $183,737, a staggering figure. We could not be more grateful for this brilliant support that will underpin the grants awarded by The EHE Foundation in 2025. ■

Baring all for EHE research

Many of the EHE patient community will be aware that Emma is a UK patient whose sister Kym is a tower of strength, and whose family and friends have quickly become champions of the EHE cause. So we were not surprised when Emma's father-in-law, Kevin, posted news of a new and brilliant fund-raising campaign:

> “As a lot of you are now aware, my Step-Daughter Emma was diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer in July. Her twin Sister Kym and Brother Ben (amongst others) have already started to raise money to donate to the EHE Rare Cancer Charity here in the UK to help fund research of, and treatments for, this sarcoma. Well……to that end we've done 'a thing'!!! A couple of weeks ago a few brave lads bared all and a very kind (if not traumatised) photographer took some pictures and we made a calendar !! We're all very proud of how it's turned out and they are now on sale for £10. If you would like to buy one, please comment below and I'll send you a private message on how to pay etc... thank you. Oh... and please feel free to share the heck out of this post!”

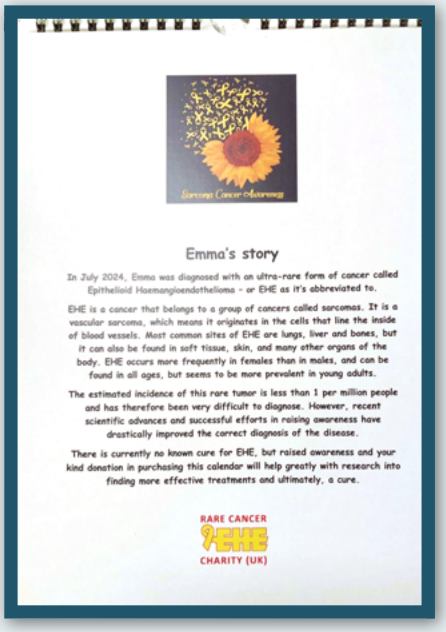
We love the idea; we love the 'naked ambition' and commitment; we love the sunflowers; and we love the compassion of the 10 lads who did indeed bare all, and in so doing have raised over £200 for EHE research. In fact we love it so much me put it on the front cover of this edition Thank you guys, you are all awesome! ■

Northern Delights Calendar
2025

RARE CANCER
EHE
CHARITY (UK)

All profits from the sales of the calendars will go to the EHE Foundation to raise awareness and fund research into finding better treatments and ultimately, a cure for this rare cancer.

Special thanks to Paul Gray Photography, Danny Hindle at Indigo, Leyland and of course the brave lads who bared all.



Emma's story

In July 2024, Emma was diagnosed with an ultra-rare form of cancer called Epithelioid Haemangioendothelioma – or EHE as it's abbreviated to.

EHE is a cancer that belongs to a group of cancers called sarcomas. It is a vascular sarcoma, which means it originates in the cells that line the inside of blood vessels. Most common sites of EHE are lungs, liver and bones, but it can also be found in soft tissue, skin, and many other organs of the body. EHE occurs more frequently in females than in males, and can be found in all ages, but seems to be more prevalent in young adults.

The estimated incidence of this rare tumor is less than 1 per million people and has therefore been very difficult to diagnose. However, recent scientific advances and successful efforts in raising awareness have drastically improved the correct diagnosis of the disease.

There is currently no known cure for EHE, but raised awareness and your kind donation in purchasing this calendar will help greatly with research into finding more effective treatments and ultimately, a cure.

RARE CANCER
EHE
CHARITY (UK)

03 EHE Fundraising

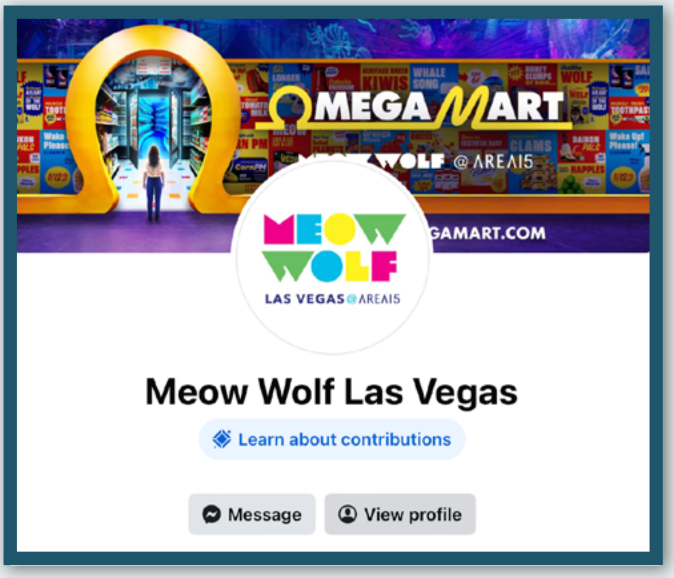
Thank you Sarina and Meow Wolf

Keren Stern wanted to post a simple message of thanks to her daughter's employer, Meow Wolf:

> **“Meow Wolf Las Vegas donated through Millie Giving allowing each employee to pick a charity of their choice. Pretty cool! We love Meow Wolf. My daughter, Sarina, of course, chose The EHE Foundation!”**

THANK YOU, SARINA!

You just backed Ehe Foundation ✨



Meow Wolf Las Vegas

We also want to thank Meow Wolf and Sarina who together enabled this wonderful donation. ■

A half marathon conquered

Just one component of Kym Wilkes' huge campaign to help and support her sister Emma was signing up for the Lancashire Loop Trail Run half marathon. Kym was running together with her and Emma's brother Ben Snape, her running partner Jessica Daggers, and Emma's Auntie-in-law, Ginny. Emma was also pleased that the EHERCC were able to provide two of their charity running shirts to help spread awareness of EHE.

All four set off on 24 November to complete the event in atrocious conditions, and complete what Kym described as **“the hardest thing I have ever done”**. Kym cannot thank her fellow runners enough for getting her through the run. Kym was also thrilled to be able to update everybody on her fundraising progress:

> **“Proceeds and sponsorship from the half marathon were all part of my fundraising page. I am so grateful for the brilliant and unbelievably generous support from so many people. We also would not have got to where we have without the fantastic effort of Beccy and Kevin and the Albion Ale House micro pub. Their festive 5K, EHE calendar and other fundraising has added so much too.”**

At the end of the year Kym's page had exceeded £15,000, and they are not stopping there! Kym posted news of a Tropical Charity Night that she and her Aunty will be holding on 28th February. It just remains for us to say congratulations and thank you to Kym, Beccy, Kevin, and everybody else for their unbelievable support. ■

Judith and the Edinburgh Super Nova

On Saturday November 2nd, Judith and David Gordon, and Judith's two best friends, Lynda Harvie and Mary Hughes, all joined the Edinburgh Super Nova 10km run/walk. Judith is an EHE patient and wanted to use the event to raise both awareness of EHE and funds for EHE research. Both Judith and David were wearing their EHE bibs in support of the charity, and the four together raised close to £2,000 on the night.

We cannot thank them and their supporters enough for this tremendous contribution. You are all Super Novas as far as we are concerned. ■

03 EHE Fundraising

The Canadians are sign painting

We love the many different events that people think of as a way to gather friends and supporters, have fun, and at the same time raise funds for EHE research. Fiona Ross in Canada is one of the most inventive and inspirational members we have in our group, so we were not surprised to see her share news of another new event:

> “On Thursday, October 10th we held a "Paint Your Own Fall Sign" fundraiser at a local Bed and Breakfast. 28 women attended and we made over $400 for EHE Research which was deposited with the Sarcoma Cancer Foundation of Canada. It was such a success that we decided to offer a Winter/Christmas edition. So, on Thursday, December 5th we had almost 50 women attend another workshop in Caledon East. In total both events raised over $1,200.”

Fiona provided a number of photographs of the activity and the excellent signs that were created. We love this creative idea, and want to thank Fiona and everybody who took part for their wonderful support.

Birthday thanks

The EHE Foundation frequently thanks supporters for supporting The EHE Foundation with a Facebook birthday fundraiser! Their generosity and that of their respective Facebook families and friends help to fund crucial research and bring hope to those living with EHE. The Foundation and the whole EHE patient community are so grateful for their kindness and commitment to the EHE cause, and always take joy in being able to wish them a Happy Birthday.

This quarter, thanks went to Richard Hartney, Sally Kulikamp, Amanda DeFoe, Carolyne Alvarez, Vanessa James, Monica Boyle Rodgers, Kim Reeves, Jennifer Eaves-Latch, Danielle Filiatrault, Mike Donohoo, Darlene LaHaie Frank, Veronica Flores, Nikki Campbell, Pam Petersen, Stahsha Maranville, Rod Stoa, and Karen Workenaour for their wonderful birthday fundraisers in support of The EHE Foundation and EHE research. ■

Third year at Artigiano in Fiera 2024

After several weeks of preparatory posts and invitations to visit, EHE Italia Non Solo Laura posted news on 30th November that their stall was open at the important international crafts fair, held at FieraMilano Rho-Pero (Milano Rho Fiera). Andrei Ivanescu, President of EHE Italia explained:

> **“This is the third year that we are participating at Artigiano in Fiera 2024, an event that brings together 3000 artisans, from more than 100 countries around the world, with a projected attendance of approximately 1,000,000 visitors. As in previous years, our participation will be aimed at raising funds to be donated to research for EHE while at the same time spreading awareness of our rare pathology. We look forward to seeing many of you! It will be an opportunity to get to know each other or see each other again!”**

EHE ITALIA
ASSOCIAZIONE NON SOLO LAURA ODV

Associazione
per lo studio e la ricerca
dell'Emangioendotelioma
Epitelioide - Tumore Raro

ARTIGIANO IN FIERA

Ci troverete nel
Padiglione 4 - ITALIA
STAND P170

VI ASPETTIAMO NUMEROSI!!

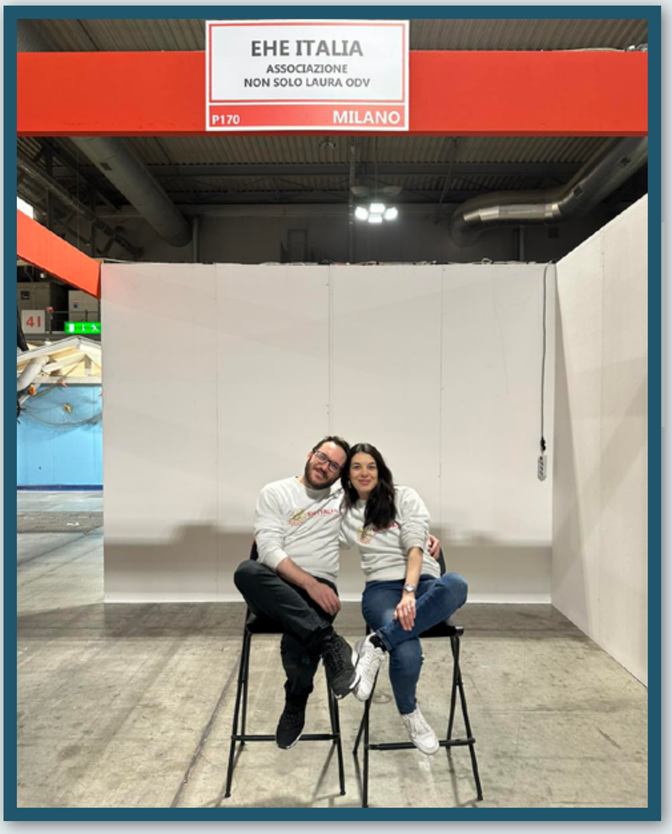
Clicca il link in descrizione e iscriviti
per ricevere il tuo biglietto GRATUITO

Per informazioni scrivici a:
info@ehe-italia.it
www.ehe-italia.it
eheitaliaodv
Associazione EHE Italia Non Solo Laura ODV

The event was once again a huge success. EHE Italia were hugely grateful to everybody who had donated so many products and so many wonderful artefacts and craft items. The photos alone look stunning.

It was once again an intense week, and all too quickly 10th December arrived and it was time to pack up. Caterina Colaci said:

> “Goodbye AF2024. Here we are at the end of our third adventure at Artigiano in Fiera! With a hint of melancholy, like every year, we bid farewell to our stand, hoping to see you again next year.
>
> A special thank you goes to all of you who came to visit us, both old friends and new acquaintances, to all our stand neighbors with whom we shared these intense days, and to those who supported us from afar. Your support was fundamental!
>
> Now it's time to prepare the report of the fair, and share the results; we can already tell you that more than 340 people have decided to actively support our cause by purchasing a solidarity gift from our stand, and many others have come forward to support us; these are gestures that warm the heart!
>
> In any case, our commitment continues: we want to raise awareness of this rare pathology, support patients, raise funds and support research in projects that can make a difference.
>
> Alone we are RARE, together we are STRONG. A big hug to everyone!!”



And congratulations to Andrei and Caterina for the €5,500 raised. A fantastic result. ■

Micro pub with mega performance

Following on from their superb EHE calendar, the Albion Ale House micro pub next organised a festive 5k run and walk to help raise funds for EHE research. The take-up and turn-out was again brilliant, helping to raise over £2,500. Emma and Kym were both there to say thank you and to join the festivities.

Next up was a festive carol singing session at The Albion which Beccy shared:

> “Good Afternoon and Merry Christmas to you and all your loved ones . This is a little clip of our Christmas Carols Afternoon which we held for the charity on behalf of Emma and Kym. It was a happy and fun afternoon and we made a nice sum of £1,255 for the charity. Not bad for a little micropub. All the very best to you all . Becs (Emma’s mum in law.) Xx.”

Sadly we cannot include the video posted by Beccy in this edition of **The Pledge**, but we can tell you that the energy and volume of the carols was fantastic. We love the spirit and determination to ***Just Live***, and want to say a huge thank you to Emma’s parents-in-law, Beccy and Kevin, and all their customers at the Albion Ale House for their compassion and support. ■

03 EHE Fundraising

Getting muddy for EHE

Kerry and Darran Marks are two very close friends of Nicola Henderson, an EHE and liver transplant patient who lives in Yate in West England. From the very start of Nicola's journey, Nicola and her family and friends have been wonderful supporters of the EHE Rare Cancer Charity. So we were not surprised to see Kerry and Darran taking part in a very wet and windy run near their homes. Nicola explained:

> “We have an event in Chipping Sodbury called the Sodbury slog! My besties, Kerry and Darran, took part in their EHERCC running shirts, raising EHE awareness, and over £1200 raised for the charity and EHE research.! XX.”

Congratulations to Kerry and Darren for their fantastic efforts and wonderful support once again. You are true champions of the EHE battle. ■

A wonderful collection for Issy

Issy worked for Royal Mail in the UK, but due to her battle with EHE had been on sick leave for some time. Her colleagues of course wanted to help, and she was delighted to post news of their fundraising:

> **“ Hi everyone, I have been off work since the summer, and my colleagues at the Royal Mail have kindly organised a collection for me. They have raised a total of £1,100 which I will be passing onto the charity. I am so grateful. All the best everyone.”**

JustGiving

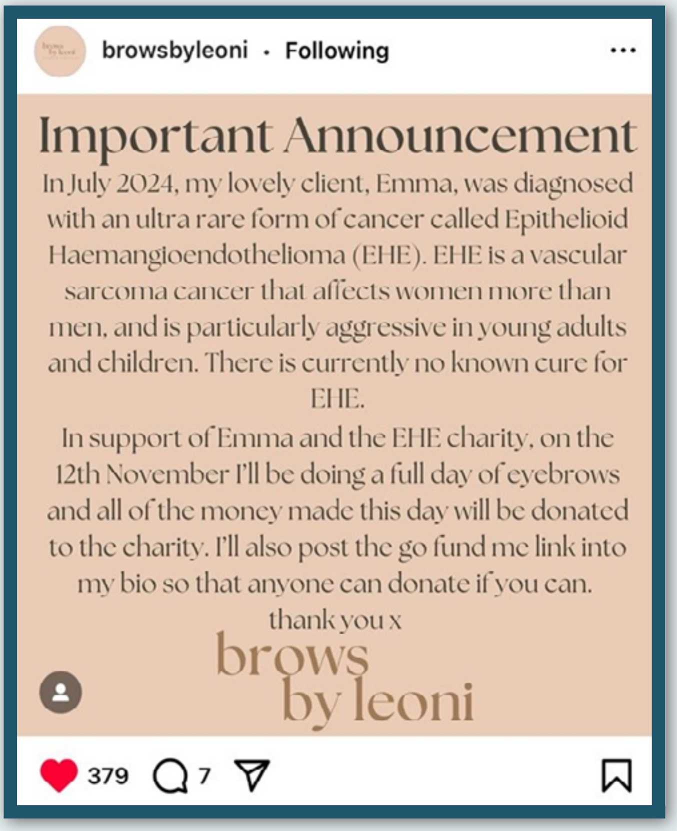
Thank you for making a difference!

Your donation of **£1,100.00** is on its way to EHE Rare Cancer Charity.
A confirmation email will be with you shortly.

It is with great sadness however that we have to also share the sad news that Issy passed away in January. Her family however wanted us to still report her Royal Mail story as they know that is what Issy would have wanted. We want to send our deepest condolences to Issy's family, and thank them for sharing this sad news. ■

Support from many directions

Emma and Kym's story about two twins, one of whom has EHE, both doing all they can to defeat this horrible disease, has caught the attention and compassion of so many people who want to help. Kym shared news of one such supporter, Leoni, who also wanted to do something to help Emma. Emma@:



browsbyleoni · **Following** ···

Important Announcement

In July 2024, my lovely client, Emma, was diagnosed with an ultra rare form of cancer called Epithelioid Haemangioendothelioma (EHE). EHE is a vascular sarcoma cancer that affects women more than men, and is particularly aggressive in young adults and children. There is currently no known cure for EHE.

In support of Emma and the EHE charity, on the 12th November I'll be doing a full day of eyebrows and all of the money made this day will be donated to the charity. I'll also post the go fund me link into my bio so that anyone can donate if you can.

thank you x

brows by leoni

379 7

> **“ The young lady who does my and Emma's eye brows held a charity day in 12th November for EHE and raised £380. We could not be more grateful for her support.”** ■

Sport and Solidarity together

On Saturday, December 14, Spinning Tuscia-My Christmas Event took place at the To Be Mattioli Fitness centre. EHE Italia Non Solo Laura were so grateful, as Andrei Ivanescu explained:

> “We would like to express a special thank you to Barbara D'Onza, Administrator Delegate of Fispin Italy, for the continuous support and encouragement she offers us at every event. We are very grateful for your constant support. Another thank you goes out to the instructors who dedicated their time and effort to contribute to our cause.
>
> Finally, we must say a huge thank you also to all the participants and a special thanks to Vice President Lucia Tozzi for chairing the fundraising banquet, from which €675 was collected, which will be donated to the association. Your contribution is very special and is greatly appreciated!” ■

EVENT SPINNING®

2024/2025

Sabato 14/12/24

TUSCIA MY CHRISTMAS

RIDE 1 - ORE 15
ALEX NUZZI - SI
ROSSANO BARTOLINO - SI

RIDE 2 - ORE 16
BARBARA D'ONZA - MI
RICCARDO SANTONI - IST

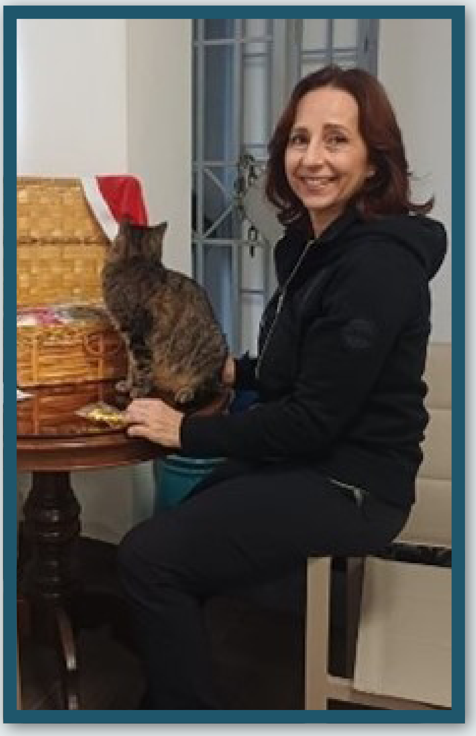
CENTRO AFFILIATO - LOCATION

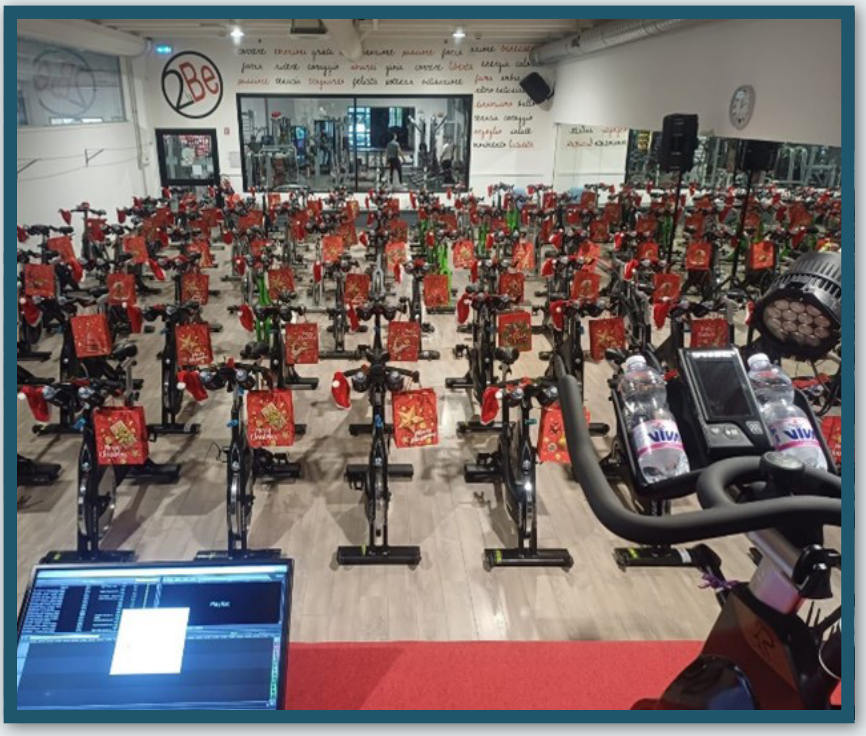
FISPIN is official SPINNING

TO BE MATTIOLI FITNESS
Strada Castiglione 51 - Viterbo

Info e prenotazioni:
339 345 8820 – 0761 250 310

EHE ITALIA





2025 is a special year

Unbelievably, 2025 will be the 10th Birthday of The EHE Rare Cancer Charity UK, The EHE Foundation in the US, and The EHE Rare Cancer Foundation Australia.

In the UK, the charity wants to celebrate this special occasion, and at the same time make 2025 their best fundraising year yet, as Hugh Leonard explained:

> “We have launched the EHERCC's ***10for10 Campaign***, asking our supporters to join the celebrations through 2025, while at the same time using the number 10 to help raise funds for EHE research! Here are some of the ideas our supporters have proposed:
>
> - Take part in a 10k run;
> - Sky dive from 10,000ft;
> - Hold 10 coffee mornings;
> - Invite 10 friends for a charity supper;
> - Take the EHE Quiz night to 10 different locations;
> - Collect and raffle 10 prizes;
> - Get 10 colleagues to join you in raising funds;
> - Organise a 10 hr sports match;
> - Donate 10% of something;
> - Any other idea that might involve 10;
> - Do 10 of the above!”

Although it was not quite 2025, the charity launched their campaign in November so they could start to organise the 10k runs. Paul Dean, EHE Race Coordinator for the charity explained:

> “We hope to have 100 runners participating in multiple 10k runs across the country, and who together will run 1,000,000 mtrs for EHE research which is awesome. And that means each metre run will be 1-in-a-million, just like our EHE patients are, and that is even more awesome. We will be issuing more information soon, so watch out for details”

Paul was soon posting more news:

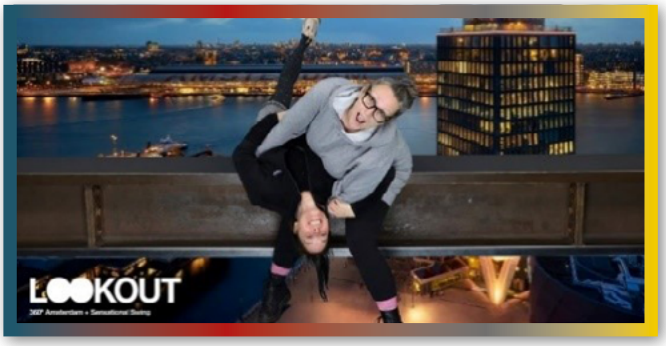
> “Sadly the EHERCC will not be participating this year in either the London Landmarks Half Marathon or the Ride London 100 event. We are delighted however to confirm that this year we will be participating in up to 12 running events all over the country and aiming for that target of over 100 runners! Runs include Birmingham 10k and Half; Bristol 10k; Glasgow 10k; Manchester 10k and half; London 10k and the Great North Run 10k and half! Dates are all on the link below.
>
> So my ask to you please is simple. If you want to raise money for EHE Charity and run one of the races then please fill out the form using this link: **https://bit.ly/EHERaceEntry**
>
> The EHERCC would be thrilled to have you run for the charity, and please forward this to anyone else you know who would like to raise money and run for EHE!” ■

04 And in other news...

Many of our global patient community do all they can to embrace the EHE Group motto, *Just Live,* determined not to let their EHE define who they are or what they can do. Here are some photos of the community doing precisely that. We thank them for posting these photos and sharing their adventures.

A European trip. Caroline Flamand, who lives in Canada, posted her photos from their trip to Europe:

> “*Just live!* French Canadian in Amsterdam & Bruges” ■



A very special day. In October, Kym posted news of her amazing day, marrying Zack. The sun shone, and everybody had a fantastic time celebrating such a special occasion. Kym was also thrilled that her twin sister, Emma, whose life has been affected by EHE, was there and able to support Kym on her special day. It really was a wonderful, emotional and uplifting day.

We all want to send our congratulations to Kym and Zack, and wish them great happiness together. ■

Another great tattoo. Linda Kay Riley posted a photo of a different *Just Live* tattoo:

> “My sweet husband had seen the EHE ***Just Live*** logo for EHE and had me sign my name and did a tattoo for me.”

We love it Linda! ■

On the slopes. Carl Dickson is a prolific contributor to the EHE Patient Support Facebook page, and a personification of ***Just Live***:

> “My 25th Thanksgiving living with cancer. It's great to see doctors wrong as I was told back then that I had maybe three to six months to live and that I should get everything together and settled for my wife. Well here we are 25 Thanksgiving Days later with our two great boys, spending another Thanksgiving skiing. I might need a guide skiing but I couldn't ask for anything better than being guided by my boys and my wife and getting to spend the day with them.

04 And in other news...

Of course it gets tiring but that's no problem as I can still do what my military training taught me, I can still sleep anywhere at any time! This bear provided a perfect spot.

Keep living your life no matter what the doctors say because you just never know how many days you have, just because they tell you one thing you never really know. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!" ■

Celebrating holiday! Stephanie Kennedy frequently posts great photos. We love to include them so here is her latest offering at Thanksgiving, from what looks like an idyllic scene.

> "I am beyond thankful to see another holiday. Let's keep going warriors. Cancer will not win!"

Just Live Stephanie! ■

Of course the fourth quarter also included other major annual holidays. Here are just a selection of the different photographs and graphics posted by the EHE community to celebrate..

Christmas, and...

... New Year

Wherever you live, whatever your circumstances, we hope that you found some peace and happiness over the festive season. Happy New Year from everybody at **The Pledge**. May 2025 bring you all health and happiness.! ■

Thank you to everybody for these lovely messages and photos.

It is wonderful to see members of our patient community living life to the full.

And always remember:

Just live

The EHE Foundation (USA)
www.fightehe.org

The EHE Rare Cancer Charity (UK)
www.ehercc.org.uk

The EHE Rare Cancer Foundation (Australia)
www.ehefoundation.com.au

EHE Italia-Associazione Non Solo Laura ODV
www.ehe-italia.it

EHE Canada
website not yet available