

The Herald

Web Issue 2343

August 29 2005

Home

» **News**

Election 2005

Sport

Business

Politics

Features

Going Out

LIVE**UPDATES**

News

Sport

SERVICES

Search the site

Free daily

email

News to your

PDA

News archive

Photo Sales

Help & FAQs

Contact us

FAVOURITES

Crosswords

The Diary

Local news

Local weather

Fantasy

Football

Week in

photos

Today's page 1

ADVERTISING

Book ads

online

Homes

Appointments

Business

Online

Advert

inquiries

RELATED**SITES**

Evening Times

Sunday Herald

Newsquest UK

TravelShop

'She likes the way Scottish people talk with kindness'

HELEN PUTTICK, Health Correspondent

August 29 2005

THEY left their home, their jobs and even their son to come to Scotland in the hope that it would save their tiny daughter's life.

Florentin and Cristina Cimpeanu, from Romania, then faced another hurdle in raising the funds for the surgery that Sabina, who has a rare form of cancer, needs to survive.

But now, after an international fundraising campaign, NHS Lothian health board has confirmed the money is in place and her operation will take place at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh a week tomorrow.

Donations have arrived from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Romania and the UK, helping them towards the £25,500 required to cover Sabina's treatment and care.

After her story was featured in The Herald, readers sent cheques to the family. One envelope containing a £10 note arrived.

The plight of Sabina, who is just over seven months old and has hepatoblastoma, a liver condition that affects one in a million children worldwide every year, was also featured on television in Romania.

There her grandmother was approached in the street by a man who gave her 50,000 lei, the equivalent of £1 sterling. He apologised, saying he did not have much money.

Mr and Mrs Cimpeanu, who raised more than £8000 themselves by pooling their savings and borrowing from friends and family, have been overwhelmed by the support.

The couple said they earned £150 a month each from their jobs, although Mr Cimpeanu, an electronics engineer, is currently on unpaid leave and his wife, who has a PhD in chemistry, is on maternity leave from her research post.

Mrs Cimpeanu said: "We want to say thanks to all who donated money to us and helped, here and all over. We have met some very kind people here. We have some friends already, Scottish friends . . . It is very hard to be without the family. That is why it is good we have some friends here."

When Sabina's cancer was first diagnosed in June, her tumour already measured at least 11cm. The couple thought the outlook was bleak, until searching the internet for information about hepatoblastoma brought them into contact with Dr Jon Pritchard, a consultant at the Edinburgh hospital and one of a small number of experts on the condition.

Now, following chemotherapy in Romania and Scotland, Sabina's tumour has halved in size.

Dr Pritchard said: "Sabina's progress has been as good as we could possibly hope. The treatment has not been particularly uncomfortable for her . . . She is wonderfully well in herself. She has gone out today looking like a rose."

Her parents have also noticed changes, such as her fingernails growing better and her personality developing.

Mrs Cimpeanu said: "She is curious about everything around her. She likes the Scottish language, because of the accent, I think, and the way people talk with kindness in their voice."

However, the couple are still anxious about the operation to remove half of Sabina's liver. It is a major procedure, performed less than once a year at the Sick Children's Hospital, which aims to take away all the cancerous cells and leave the liver to regenerate itself.

Trials have shown that, with the benefits of modern medicine, patients such as Sabina have up to an 82% chance of cure.

Gordon MacKinlay, the consultant paediatric surgeon performing the operation, said: "The point of this particular tumour is that surgery is the only real answer. In the past the outcome was very grim, because surgery was the only option and these tumours are very large. But the treatment that we perform, giving the chemotherapy before surgery . . . enhances the chance of complete cure."

He added: "Sabina has responded very well to the chemotherapy so I would be very optimistic of her being within the percentage of cured patients."

MONDAY FEATURES



Read all the latest news from the Edinburgh Book Festival, plus the first part of our gripping new thriller

THE DIARY



Glaswegian makes it into The World's Stupidest Criminals



£20,000
OF PRIZES
TO BE WON!

AdsOnline
Click here to book your ad online now

HousePriceGuide

More Scottish jobs bar none
s1 jobs.com

s1 homes.com
The no.1 property site for Central Scotland

TravelShop
Holiday Insurance

He also said the equipment now available for cutting the liver minimised one of the main risks – bleeding – which can be a problem because the liver has such a good blood supply.

David Bolton, chief operating officer of the health board's university hospital division, said: "NHS Lothian is content that there are now sufficient funds to pay for Sabina's treatment. I understand that raising these funds has caused hardship for the Cimpeanu and am therefore glad that Sabina's treatment has been so successful to date. I wish them all the best for her continuing treatment."

- The couple have a Lloyds account for donations, account number 08340086, sort code 877003. Cheques should be made out to Florentin and Irina Cristina Cimpeanu.

What is hepatoblastoma?

It is a very rare cancerous tumour that originates in the liver. The disease primarily affects children from infancy to about five years.

Most cases appear during the first 18 months of life. Hepatoblastoma cancer cells can spread (metastasise) to other areas of the body. The most common sites of metastasis are the lungs, into the abdomen and abdominal structures. Rare sites of metastasis include the bone, the central nervous system and the bone marrow.

What causes hepatoblastoma?

The cause is unknown, although there are a number of genetic conditions that are associated with an increased risk for developing hepatoblastoma.

How is it hepatoblastoma treated?

The treatment is generally aimed at removing as much of the tumour as possible while also maintaining adequate liver function. Liver tissue can regenerate after surgery.

Copyright © 2005 Newsquest (Herald & Times) Limited. All Rights Reserved
[Sitemap](#) :: [Subscription](#) :: [Syndication](#) :: [Advertising](#) :: [About Us](#) :: [Terms of Use](#)