

The Estée Lauder Companies Benelux University Fund – Moving cancer care forward, 2018

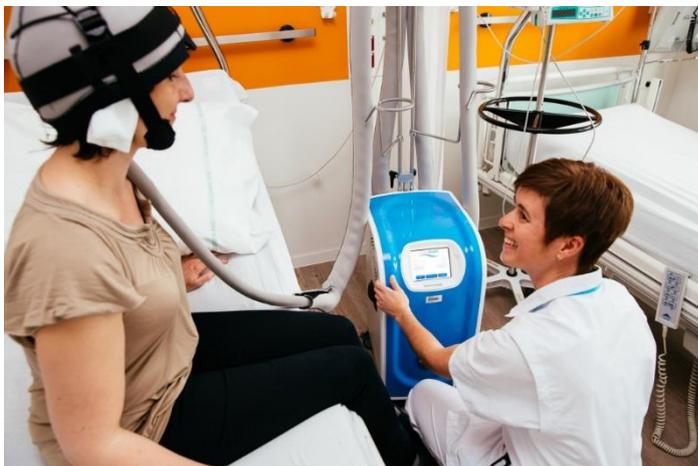
The Estée Lauder Companies Benelux and the Leuven Cancer Institute continue their partnership to support (breast) cancer patients in their battle against the disease and improve quality-of-life.

For 2018, the focus will be to alleviate debilitating side effects of (breast) cancer treatment. Breast cancer treatments and cancer treatments in general are associated with visible side effects such as hair loss, nail changes and skin changes.

Hair loss is one of the most feared side effects of chemotherapy. In many chemotherapy regimens, patients are confronted with complete hair loss after 2-3 weeks of treatment. Some chemotherapy regimens cause no complete hair loss but thinning of the hair.

Nail changes occur in about 40% of patients treated with taxanes. This chemotherapy is the standard treatment for breast cancer. Patients experience nail changes such as grooves or ridges, nails that break more easily, changes in nail shape or texture, nail splitting, pain. These changes may prevent patients from doing their usual activities. It may be hard to pick up small things such as a pen or a fork, to button clothes, to put on shoes and walk.

The impact of both these side effects go much further than ‘the physical’. Not only do they drastically alter patients’ self-image, they also add to the stigma of cancer: patients see themselves as “cancer patients” now and they are being seen as cancer patients by the outside world. Some patients therefore give up on social activities. Thus, outward symptoms of cancer treatment may weigh heavily on patients’ mental and social well-being. From a patient perspective, the need for “state-of-the-art hair and nail care” is clear.



The Estée Lauder Companies Benelux and the Leuven Cancer Institute join hands to further research and advance the prevention of hair loss and nail changes in patients with cancer. Cooling of the scalp, hands, feet, ... (or cryotherapy) leads to local vasoconstriction and a reduced blood flow in the scalp, hands or feet so that they become less affected and damaged by chemotherapy. Cooling of the scalp during chemotherapy infusion is effective in preventing hair loss in some

chemotherapy regimens but there is need for further research and better accessibility to patients. Frozen gloves and socks are known to prevent nail changes with previous breast cancer treatment, but evidence is lacking for the current standard treatment. In researching efficacy and impact of cryotherapy for hair loss and nail changes lies the key to change and improve supportive care for these side effects and ultimately, to reduce their mental impact and social stigma.

The Leuven Cancer Institute is very pleased to find in The Estée Lauder Companies Benelux such a motivated partner to fight the esthetical, mental and social impact of cancer.