Rooted deeply in society and the scientific world, DCS established for the commemoration of its 50th anniversary a range of events, each aiming at a special part of its backing. Speech-making was a congress annex information market where patients and care providers met and discussed developments in cancer control and the needs of patients. In September DCS together with the association of next of kin of cancer patients organised the first Cancer Memorial Day in the Netherlands. It preceeded the official commemoration of 50 year Dutch Cancer Society, a Scientific Congress attended by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix. At that occasion the chairman of DCS set a clear goal: in the next 25 years the cure rate for cancer in the Netherlands should increase from half to two-thirds of the patients. The commemoration year was concluded by a national fundraising TV-manifestation. It raised over 25 million guilders and more than 70,000 new donators.

Cancer research

In 1999 DCS for the first time in its history spent more than 100 million Dutch guilders (about 50 million dollars) on scientific cancer research. In total, DCS finances about 300 research projects carried out within the Netherlands Cancer Institute in Amsterdam and the Daniel den Hoed Cancer Center in Rotterdam and in other universities, academic hospitals and scientific institutes in the Netherlands as well. This year 89 new projects will start. The distribution of the budget over the research disciplines is as follows:

- 52% fundamental research and prevention of cancer,
- 8% research on improvement of diagnostics,
- 33% research on improvement of therapies,
- 7% research in the field of psycho-social oncology.

Independent experts from the Netherlands and abroad assess all the applications for quality and relevance. The ‘high’ budget for research covers only about 35% of the submitted and approved applications.

Every year DCS publishes an overview of the subsidized research projects (in English). This publication is called ‘Current Cancer Research in the Netherlands’ and is available on request. The overview contains summaries of the protocols for ongoing clinical trials. Data management for these clinical trials is supported by DCS, on advice of the Commission for Clinical Comparative Research of the Dutch Cancer Society.

In 1998 a particularly big inheritance was allocated to translational research. For this purpose, a special program has been developed in which young and excellent researchers can combine clinical work with the start of an own research line. In the next years DCS will pay specific attention to the results of the Human Genome Project, in order to contribute to its clinical application.

Education and public Information

The annual budget for education and training of professionals is about five million Dutch guilders. Students can apply for a training grant to do cancer research in institutes abroad. There is also a program of fellowships for promising young researchers who want to specialize in cancer research and treatment of cancer in institutes within the Netherlands and abroad. In addition research institutes can invite foreign researchers to come to the Netherlands to pass on their knowledge on cancer research.

At the moment DCS has created five special chairs at universities to stimulate cancer research.

Good information is crucial for cancer patients and their relatives as well. For that reason DCS runs in its office an information centre and a free phone service. This deals with over 16,000 personal calls per year and about 40,000 requests for DCS produces leaflets and brochures. Over 80 different titles are available covering most of the regular types of cancer and therapies, living with cancer, cancer prevention and early detection. Each year over five million copies find their way to doctors and patients. The Dutch Cancer Society supports associations of cancer patients, financially and on request practically. The Dutch Federation of Associations of cancer patients has over 20 members.

In order to fight tobacco use more effectively, DCS joined forces with the Dutch Heart Foundation and the Asthma Fund and established a joint institute in 1974. The same was done in order to promote Health Education on the Workplace.

Health Care: A top issue for US Democrats in the election year

In the US Health Care is back as an issue in the forefront of the political agenda. A survey done by the Keiser Family Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health shows that Health Care is one of the biggest concerns of voters. Health care was cited as a
priority by 28% of people surveyed. That is the highest level that this issue has reached in recent decades. Two years ago, for instance, health care ranked highest only in one out of eight Americans. After a long sleep the health care issue has awakened.

For the candidates running for the 2000 presidential election, health care is especially important in capturing the women's vote. Women pay more attention to social issues.

However, Americans disagree on how to improve the coverage and to cover the nation's uninsured.

Forty-four million Americans are uninsured. And the federal government reported recently that the number of Americans without health insurance is rising, moreover a lot of the insured are not satisfied with the care they get. Only 39% of the voters surveyed would favor insuring everybody. The majority supports a limited intervention that would not require any tax increase. While the Democrats have offered big plans, the Republican candidates have not elaborated any new proposal.

Bill Bradley and Al Gore, the two Democrats, have proposed detailed plans. Bradley proposes to spend $650 billion over the next 10 years to extend coverage to about 30 million Americans who do not have any health insurance now. He would offer those on low incomes tax breaks and subsidies to help pay for insurance. Bradley's proposal would be the single biggest expansion of health coverage since 1965 when Medicare and Medicaid were adopted. The project would cost roughly two-thirds of the projected budget surplus.

Gore's proposal is less ambitious: it seeks to provide universal access to coverage for children by 2005 by expanding the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) enacted by Congress three years ago. Gore does not believe Bradley's expensive plan has any possibility to make its way through the Congress. According to some experts, this plan recalls the response of the reformers to defeat of the national health intervention that would not require any tax increase. Perhaps not everyone knows that...

perhaps not everyone knows that... for patients who are excessively anticoagulated with warfarin, small doses of subcutaneous (s.c.) phytonadione may not correct the INR as rapidly or as effectively as when it is administered i.v. These are the results of a randomized trial with 22 patients who had an asymptomatic prolongation of prothrombin time and were treated with either 1 mg of phytonadione i.v. or 1 mg s.c. At 8 hours, the mean INR was 4.6 in the i.v. group and 8.0 in the s.c. group (P = 0.006), and at 24 hours 3.1 in the i.v. group and 5.0 in the s.c. group (P = 0.009). Higher doses must be considered for more rapid and complete reversal of anticoagulation by the s.c. route [1].

...an information video increases knowledge and decreases anxiety in patients preparing for colonoscopy. These are the results of a study on 198 patients who were scheduled to undergo colonoscopy and who were approached about 1 week before the procedure for information and measurement of level of anxiety and then randomly assigned to watch or not watch the information video on the subject. Immediately before colonoscopy, all patients completed a second anxiety questionnaire and a knowledge questionnaire. Patients who watched the video were significantly less anxious before colonoscopy than those who did not. The former also scored higher on the knowledge questionnaire than the latter with regard to the purpose of the procedure, procedural details, and potential complications of colonoscopy [2].

organochlorine compounds such as p,p9-DDT, p,p9-DDE, and some PCBs could play a part in the pathogenesis of exocrine pancreatic cancer through