



**ce  
in  
ge**  
BIOTECNOLOGIE  
AVANZATE s.c.a.r.l.



**European  
Reference  
Network**  
for rare or low prevalence  
complex diseases

**Network**  
Hematological  
Diseases (ERN EuroBloodNet)

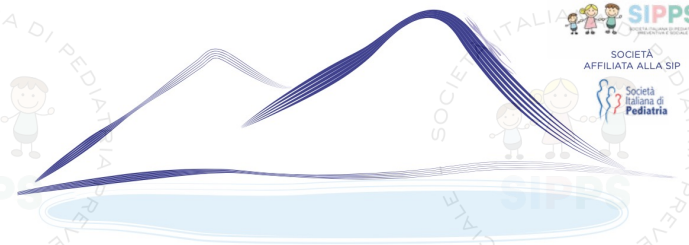
# *Le neoplasie del bambino: geni, prevenzione e terapia*

## *Napule è...*

PEDIATRIA PREVENTIVA E SOCIALE

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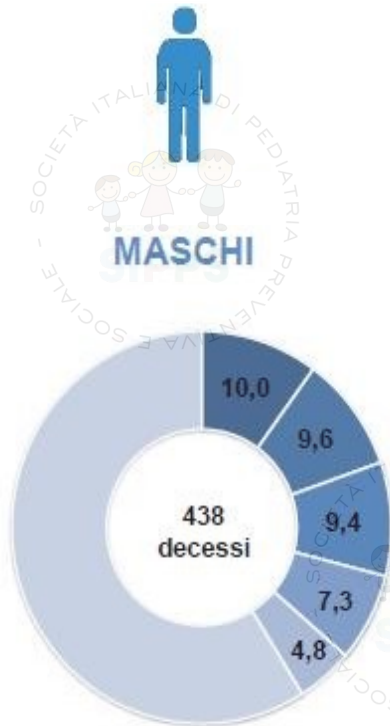
*Napoli, 29 aprile 2023*

# Tumori in età pediatrica: la “dimensione” del problema

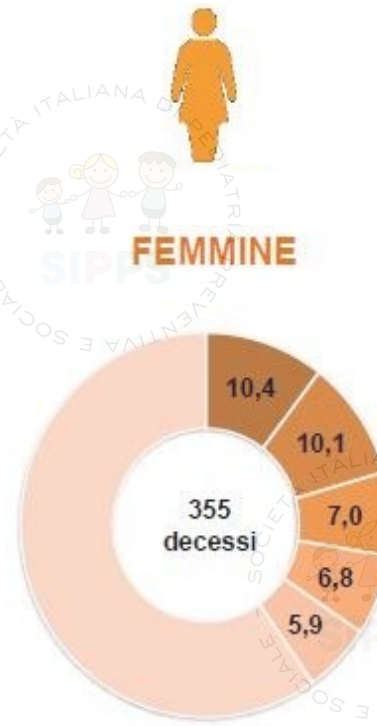
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- Patologia rara con incidenza di 15 nuovi casi/100.000 bambini compresi tra 0 e 14 aa/anno
- Ogni anno in Italia vengono diagnosticati circa 1400 nuovi casi di tumore tra i bambini
- La possibilità di ammalarsi di tumore in età pediatrica è 1: 600
- Un pediatra diagnostica nella sua vita professionale 1-5 casi di tumori maligni o di leucemie.

# Cause di morte



- 1. Malformazioni congenite ed anomalie cromosomiche (44)
- 2. Leucemia (42)
- 3. Accidenti di trasporto (41)
- 4. Tumori maligni del cervello e del sistema nervoso centrale (32)
- 5. Disturbi metabolici (21)



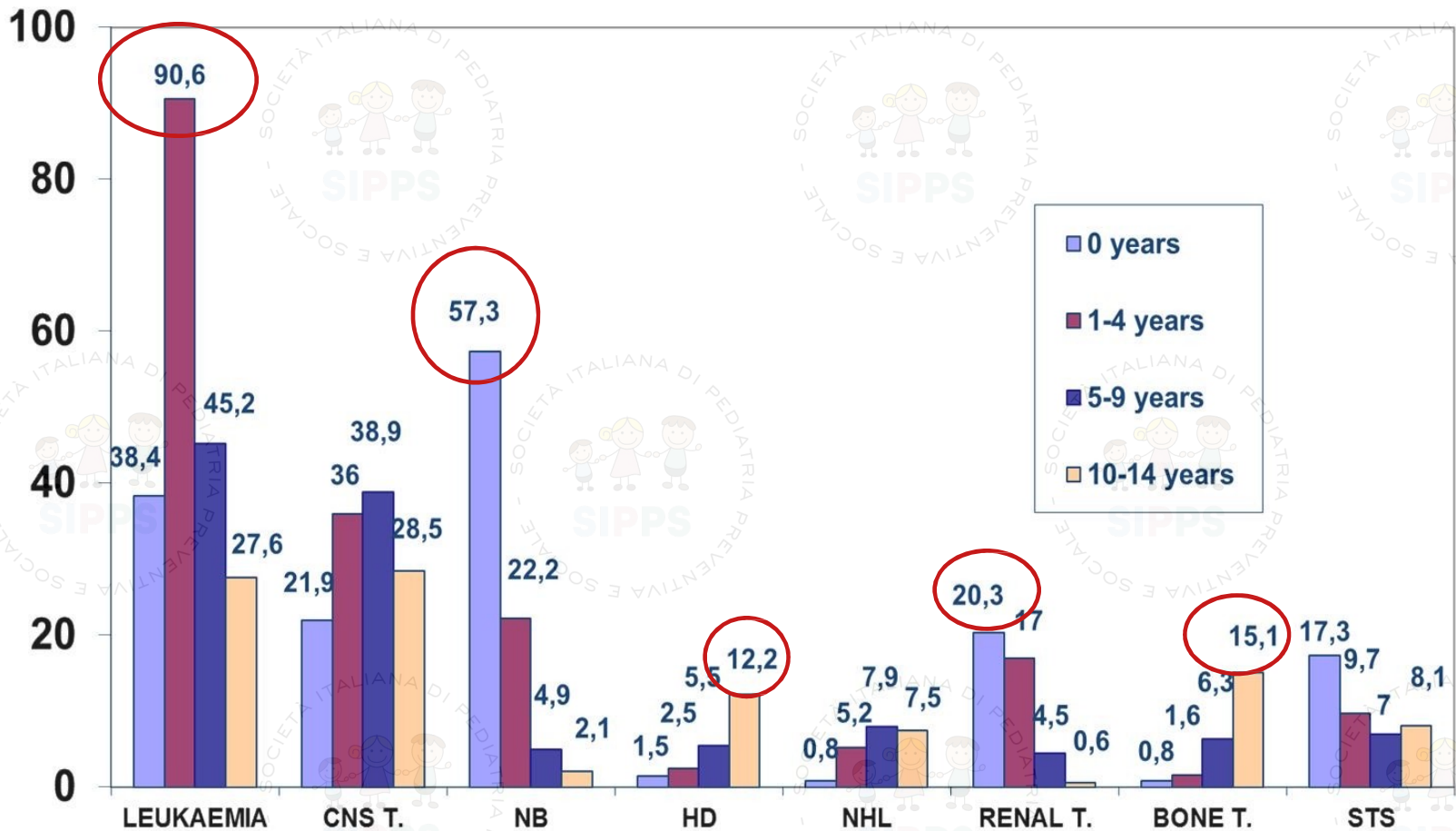
- 1. Malformazioni congenite ed anomalie cromosomiche (37)
- 2. Leucemia (36)
- 3. Altre malattie del cuore (25)
- 4. Accidenti di trasporto (24)
- 5. Tumori maligni del cervello e del sistema nervoso centrale (21)

# Diagnosi precoce: il problema

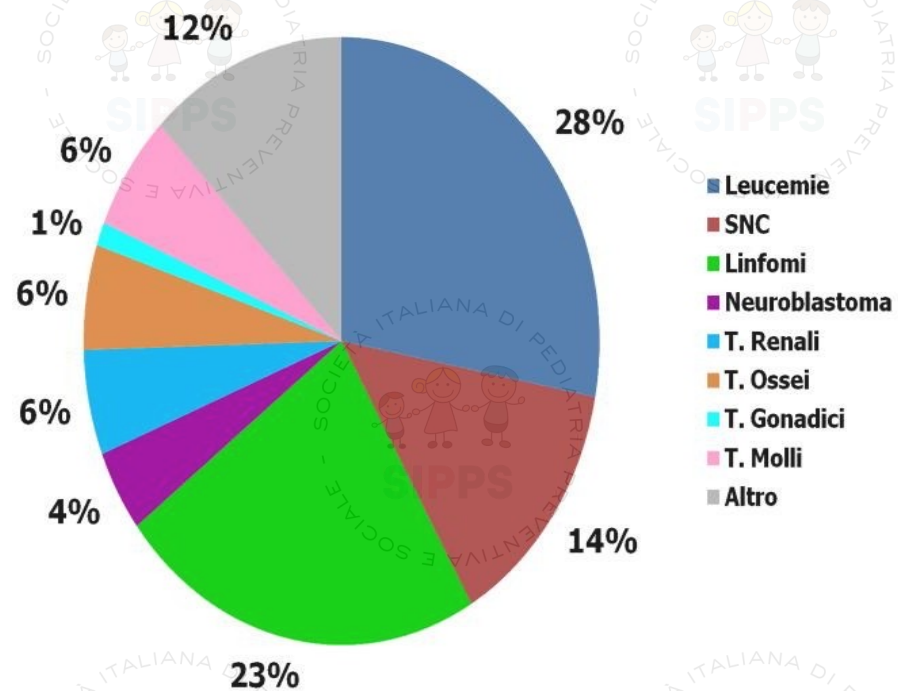
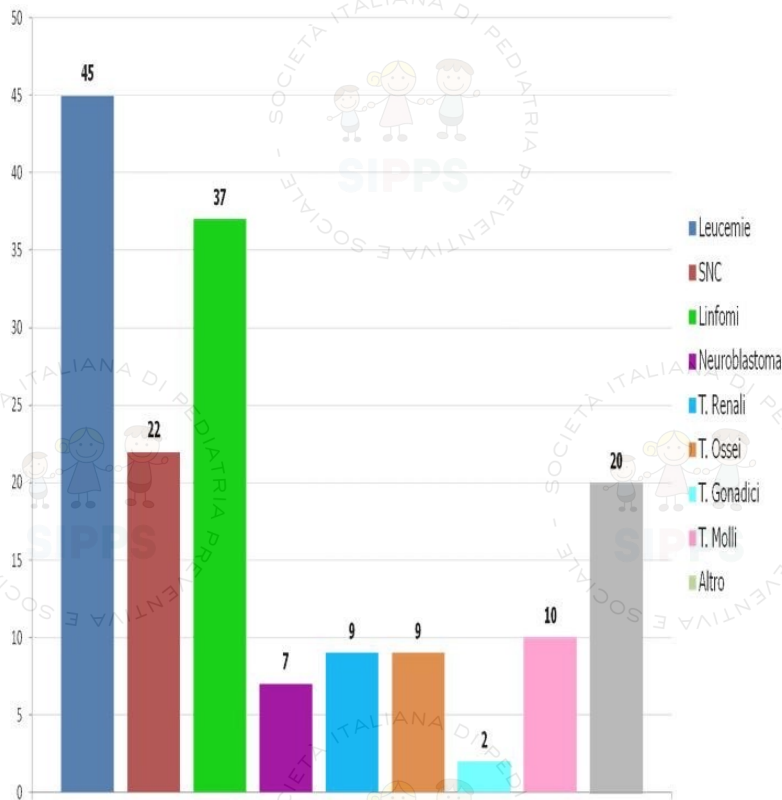
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- Patologie poco frequenti
- Sintomi e segni clinici relativamente non specifici e spesso riportabili ad altre patologie più comuni e meno gravi
- Disponibilità di pochi markers tumorali
- Impossibilità di effettuare screening

# Tumori ed età del bambino



# Tumori pediatrici in Campania (2013-2014)



# Differences in ped/adult cancers

- **ADULT CANCERS**

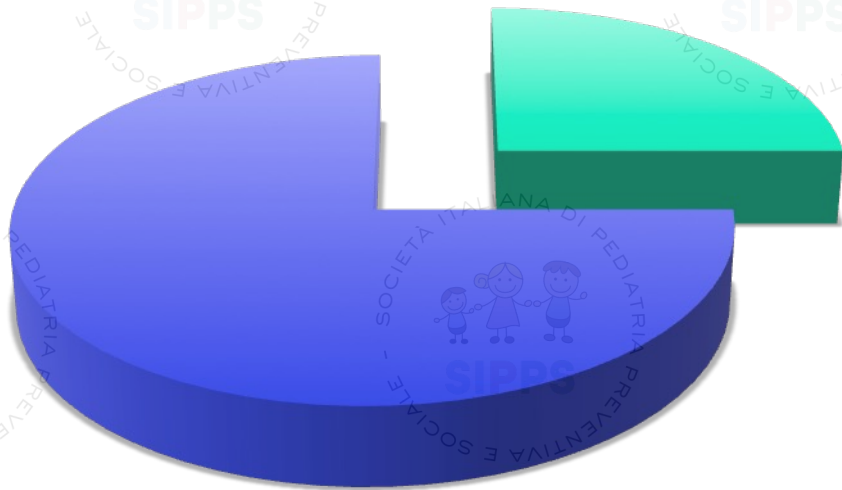
not seen in children:

- Breast ca
- Lung ca
- Colon ca
- Testicular ca
- Prostate ca

- **PEDIATRIC CANCERS** not seen in adults:

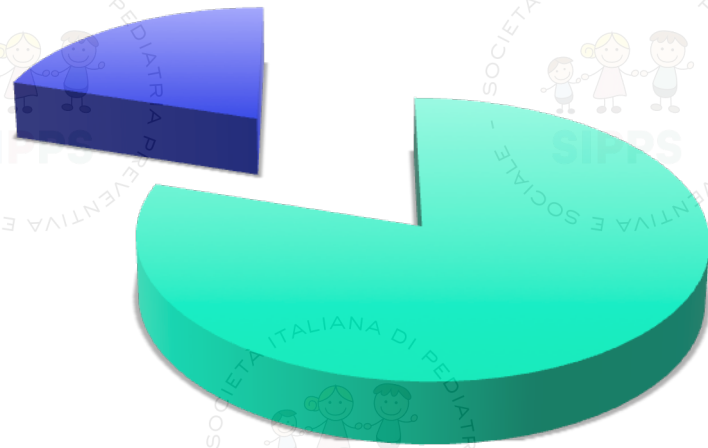
- Wilms tumor
- Rhabdomyosarcoma
- Neuroblastoma

**Adulto**



- Geni
- ambiente

**Bambino**

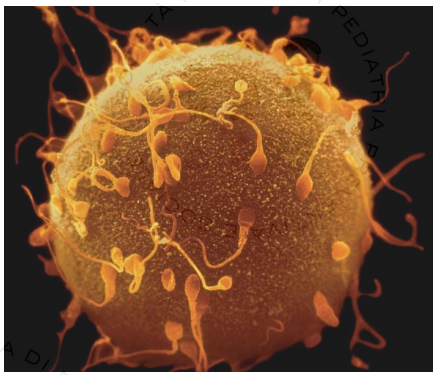


- Geni
- Ambiente

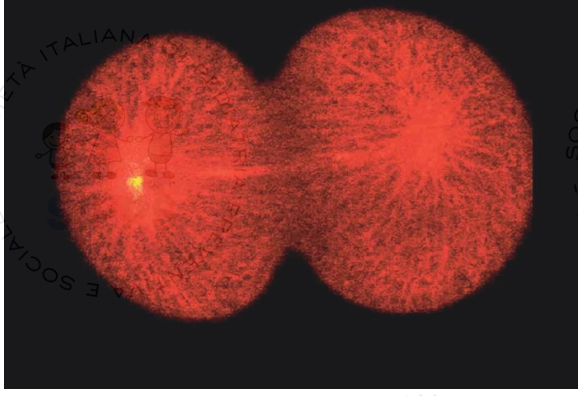
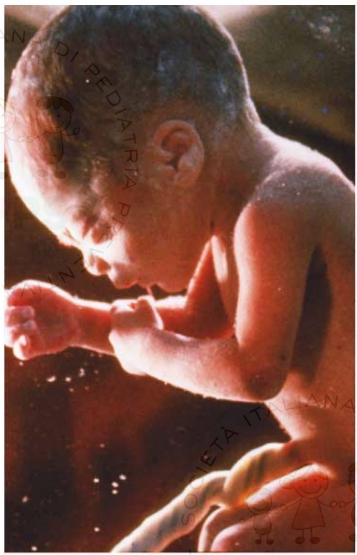
I tumori sono  
sempre  
dovuti al  
contributo di  
più fattori



# Sexual Reproduction

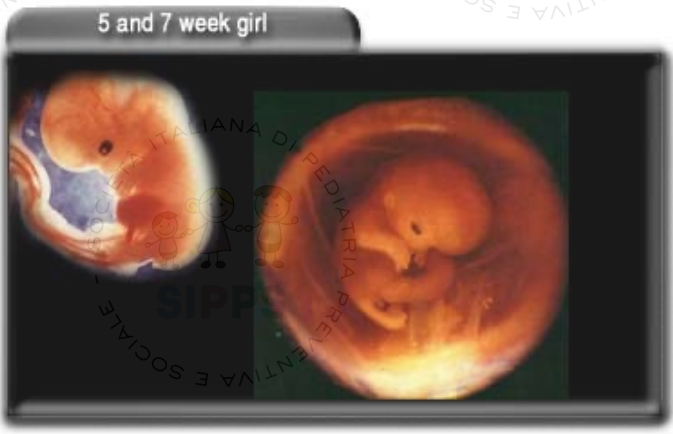


Once an egg becomes fertilized, cellular divisions begins, eventually producing a whole organism



Malignancy is a loss of cell cycle coordination

All cells derived from the zygote contain the exact genetic material



REPLICATION >>>> DIFFERENTIATION

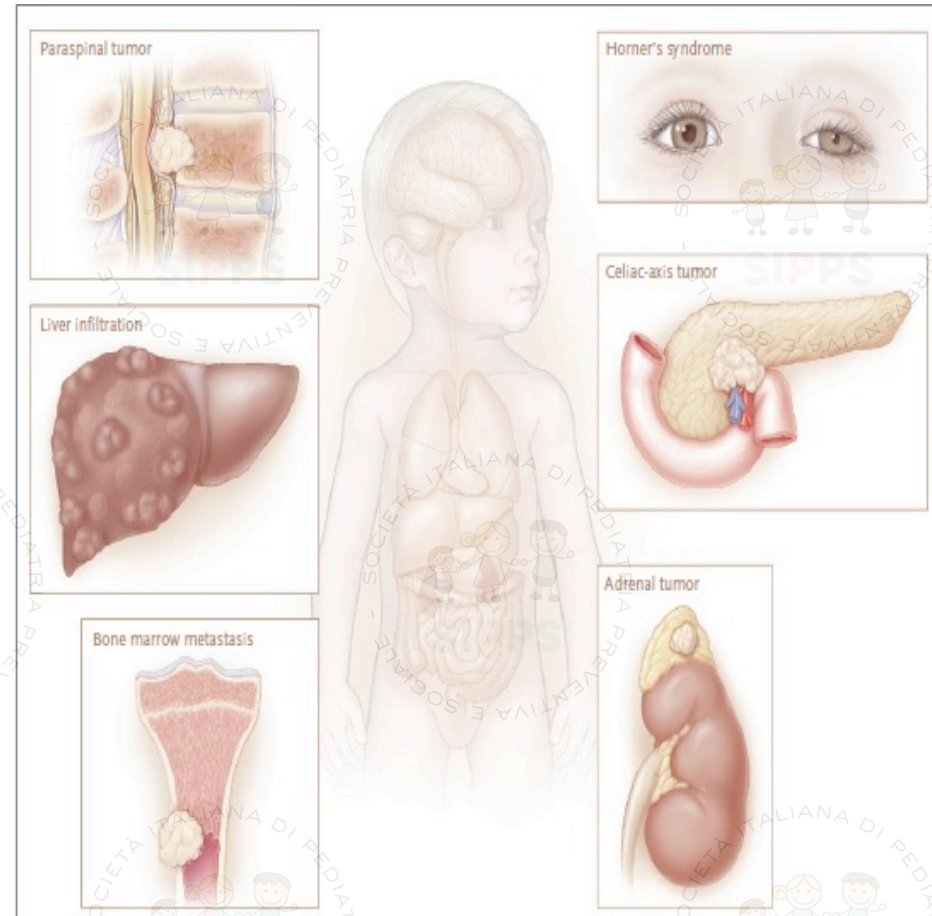


## Domande in cerca di risposta:

- Siamo predisposti?
- Si può prevedere la risposta alla terapia?
- Si può prevedere la ricaduta?
- Trovare l'alterazione sul DNA può servire a curare il tumore?
- Se si, come?

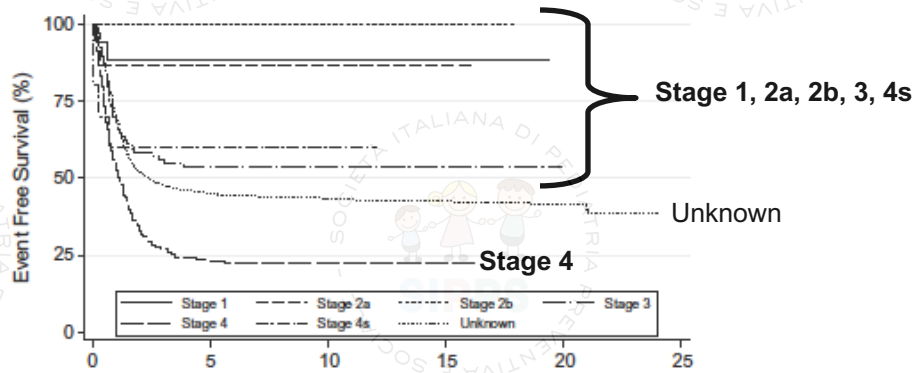
# Neuroblastoma (NBL)

- Tumors can arise anywhere along the sympathetic nervous system, with the majority occurring in the adrenal medulla
- No proven environmental risk factors
- Median age dx = 17 months
- Remarkable clinical heterogeneity (Stage 4 and 4s)
- Sporadic and Familial (1%) Neuroblastoma

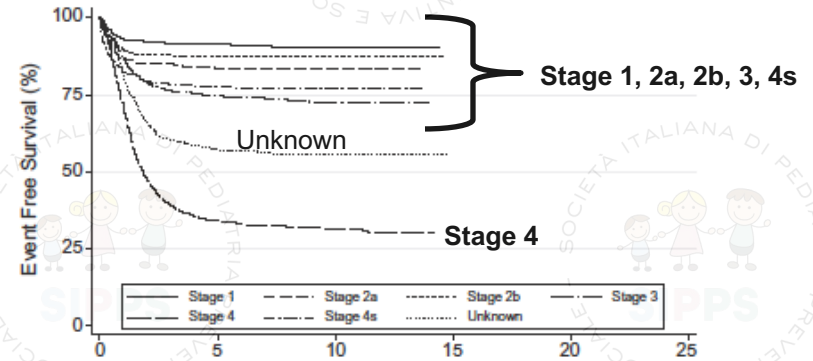


# Stage 4 patients still have very low rate of event free survival

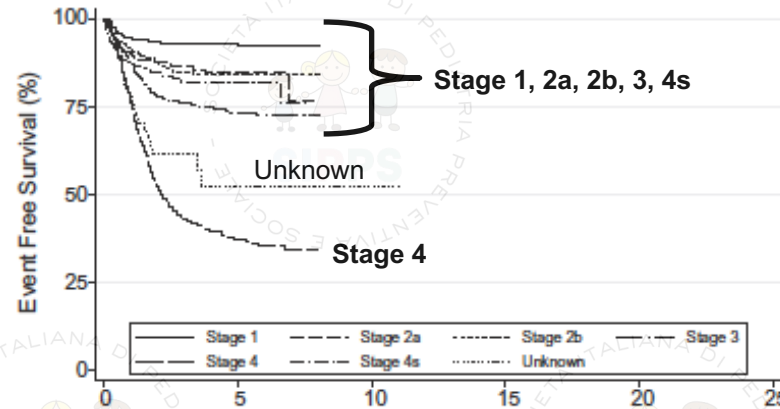
## Era I: 1974-1989



## Era II: 1990-1996



## Era III: 1997-2002



# Genomics discoveries in neuroblastoma

1977-  
1989

Brodeur et al  
1977:  
*1p deletion*

Biedler et al,  
1980:  
*17q gain*

Shawb et al 1983:  
*MYCN ampl*

Look et al 1984 :  
*DNA diploid and  
high stage tumor*

1990-  
1999

Svriivan et al.  
1993:  
*11q deletion*

Nakagawara et al.  
1993:  
*low expression  
TrkA*

2000-  
2009

Trochet et al. 2004:  
*PHOX2B mutations  
in familial  
neuroblastoma*

Mosse et al. 2008:  
*ALK mutations in  
familial and sporadic  
neuroblastoma*

Maris et al. 2008:  
*CASC15  
susceptibility locus*

Capasso et al. 2009:  
*BARD1  
susceptibility gene*

2010-  
present

Versteeg et al. 2010:  
*ATRX somatic  
mutations*

Diskin, Capasso et  
al.2012:  
*LIN28B  
susceptibility gene*

Diskin, Capasso et  
al. 2014:  
*TP53 susceptibility  
gene*

Capasso et al. 2014  
*NEFL susceptibility  
gene*

# The International Neuroblastoma Risk Group (INRG) Classification System

## Poor prognosis:

### Genetic Markers

DNA di-*ploidy*

MYCN amplification

Deletion 11q

17q gain and 1p36 deletion

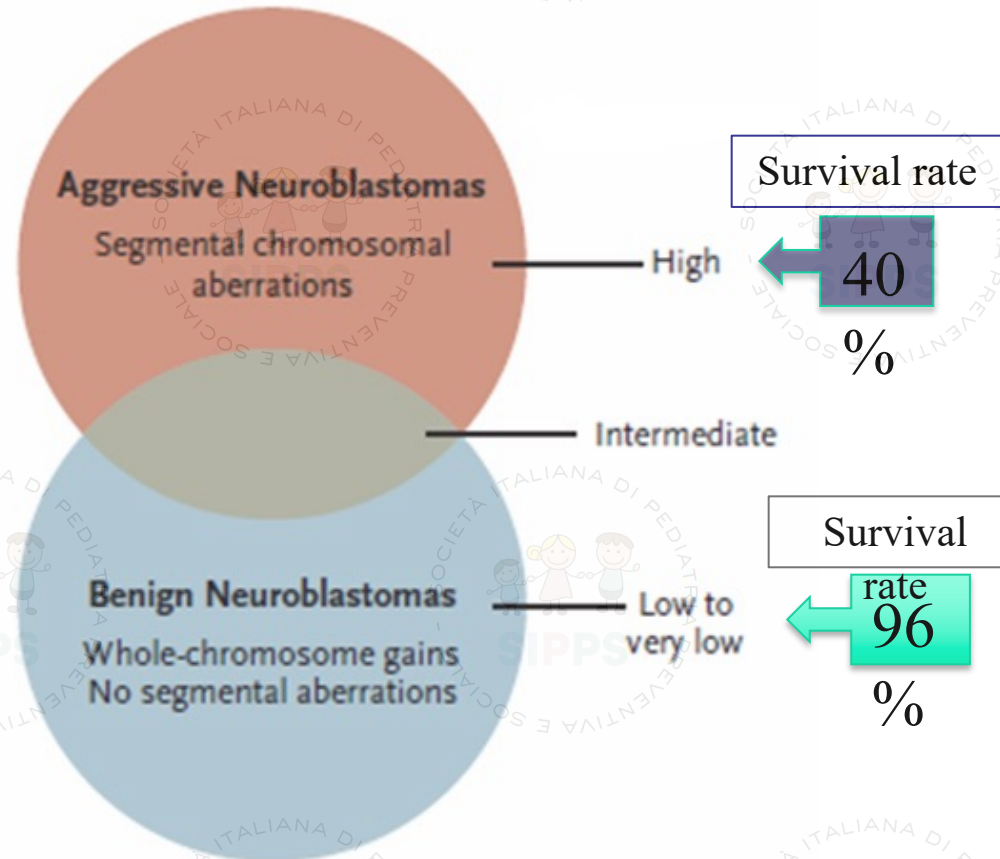
ALK mutations

BARD1 polymorphisms

### Clinical Markers

Age > 18 months

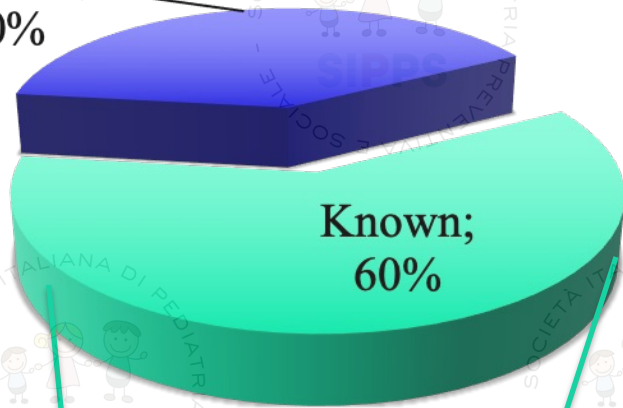
INSS stage = 4



# Familial vs Sporadic Neuroblastoma

## Genetics of Familial NBL

Unknown;  
40%



Known;  
60%

ALK mutations (50%)  
PHOX2b mutations (9-8%)

## Genetics of Sporadic NBL

Unknown;  
80%

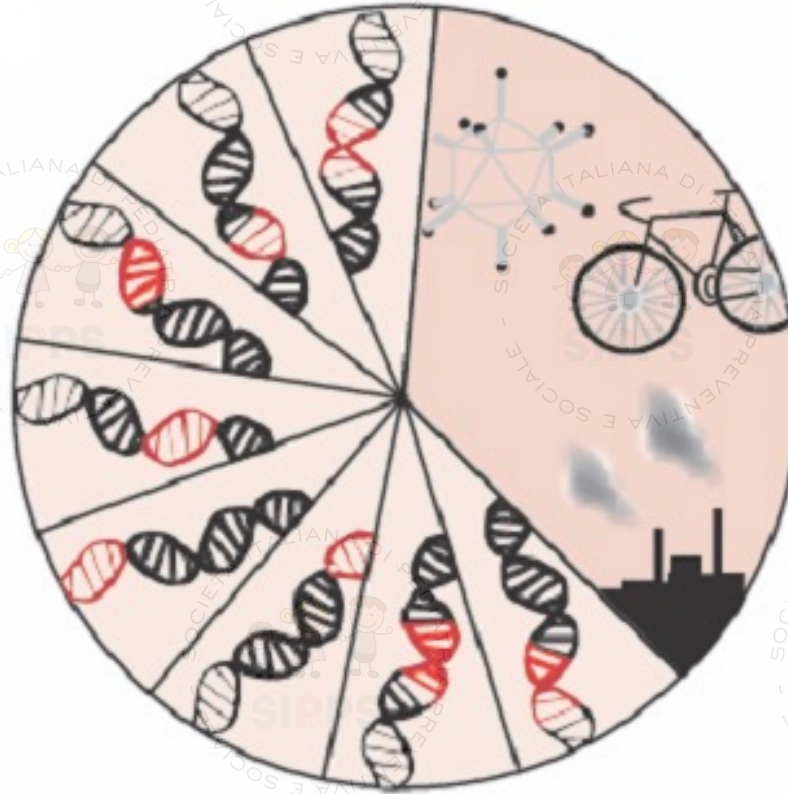


Known;  
20%

Somatic variants  
Heritable variants



# Complex disease



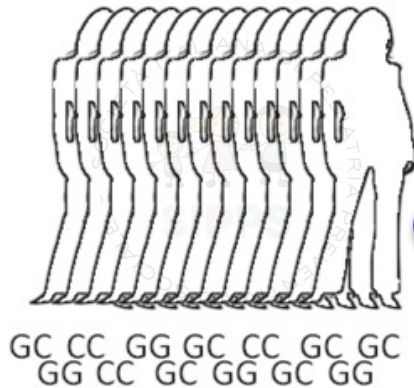
**Complex disease:** many variants of small effect contribute to disease risk, along with many environmental factors.



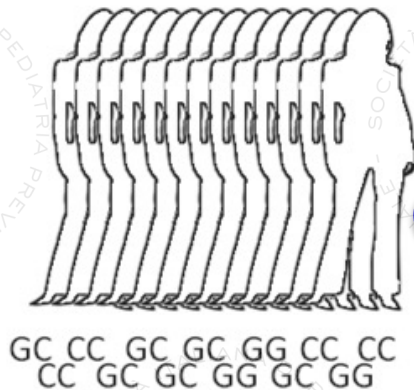
# GWAS analysis:

Thousands of cases and controls and 1 million of SNPs

Cases



Controls



SNP1

Cases

Count of G:  
2104 of 4000

Frequency of G:  
52.6%

Controls

Count of G:  
2676 of 6000

Frequency of G:  
44.6%

P-value:

$5.0 \cdot 10^{-15}$

SNP2

Cases

Count of G:  
1648 of 4000

Frequency of G:  
41.2%

Controls

Count of G:  
2532 of 6000

Frequency of G:  
42.2%

P-value:

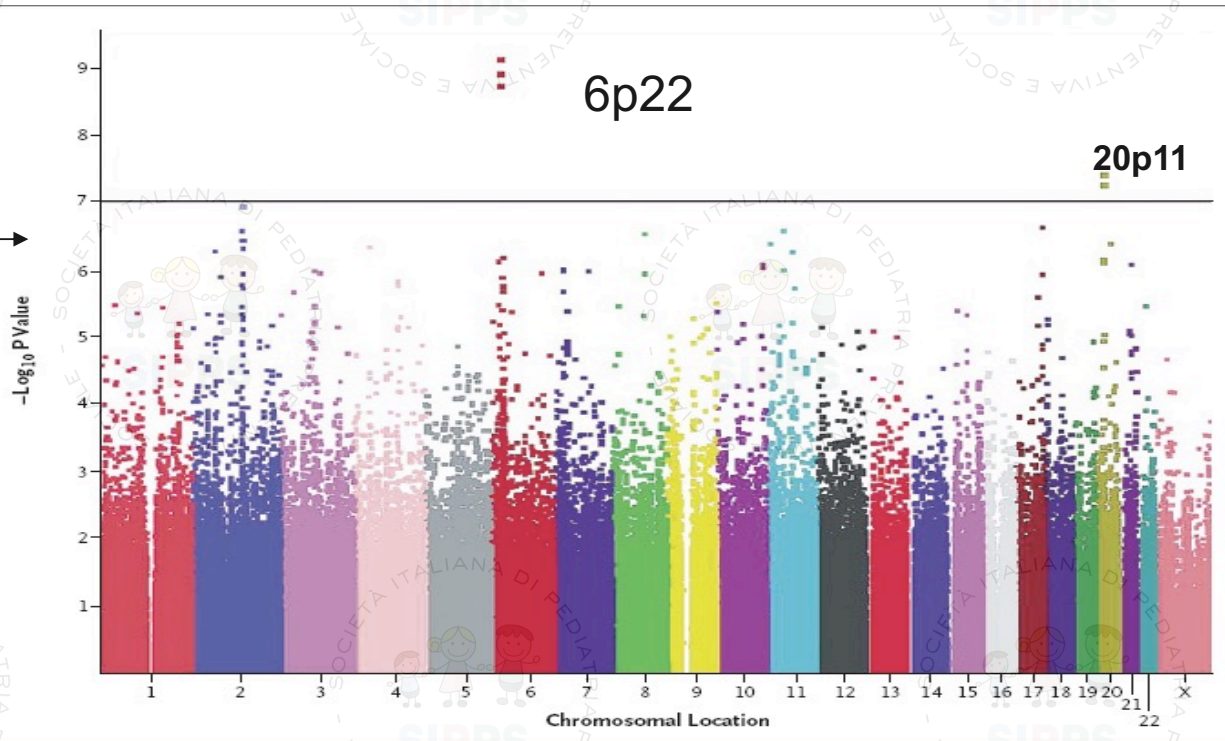
0.33

SNP...

Repeat for all  
SNPs

P-value <  $5 \times 10^{-8}$

# Manhattan plot

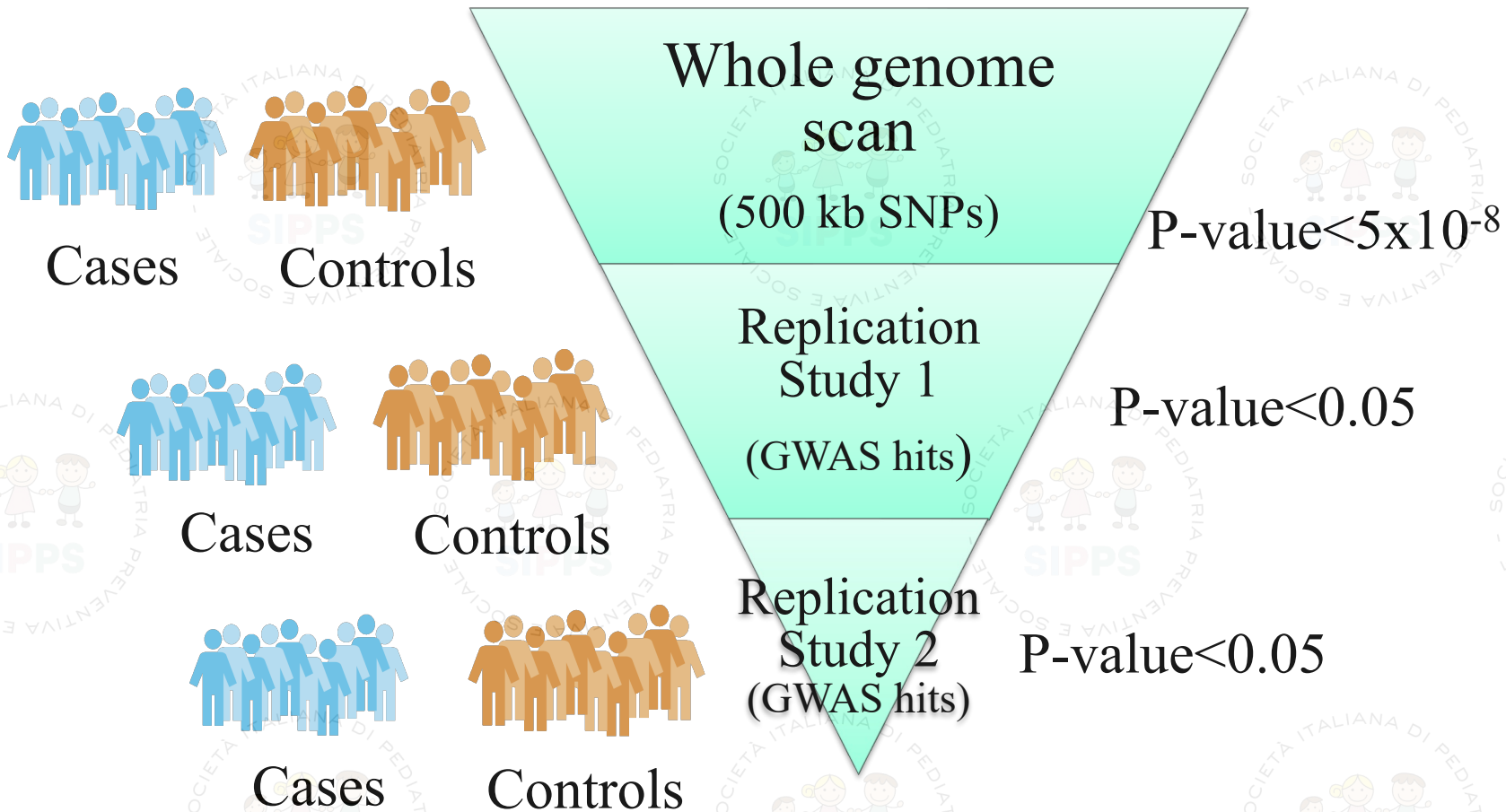


Genome-wide  
significance  
threshold



Maris et al, NEJM 2008

# GWAS: Replication Study approach



## Real SNP-associations

# Trait-associated SNPs are often located in gene regulatory regions

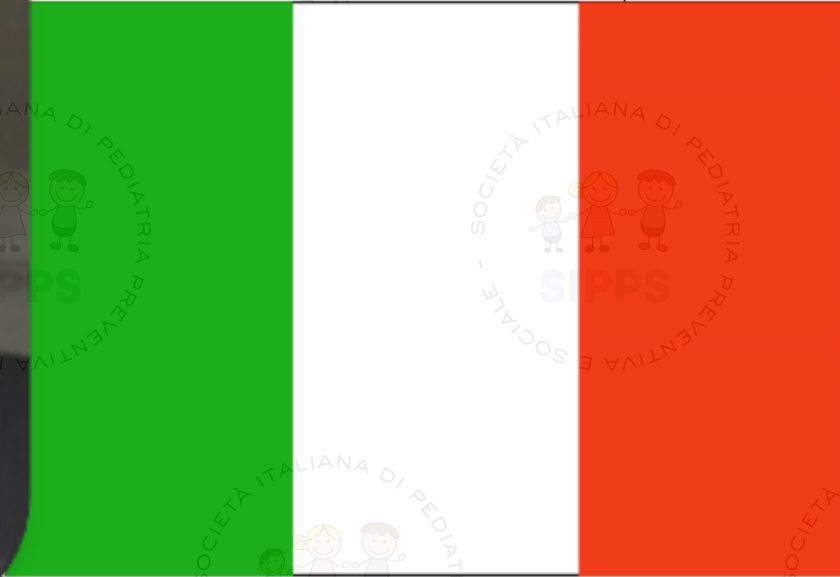
Top-scoring GWAS SNPs are frequently positioned within enhancer elements specifically active in relevant cell types (Ernst, Nature 2011)

**a**

Phenotype	Top cell type	Total no. SNPs from study	No. SNPs in enh. states 4 and 5	P value	FDR	H1 ES	K562	GM12878	HepG2	HUVEC	HSMC	NHLF	NHEK	HMEC
Erythrocyte phenotypes	K562	35	9	$<10^{-7}$	0.02	9	17	4	0	0	1	2	1	1
Blood lipids	HepG2	101	13	$<10^{-7}$	0.02	3	5	0	11	2	3	3	4	3
Rheumatoid arthritis	GM12878	29	7	$2.0 \times 10^{-7}$	0.03	0	0	15	0	2	0	0	2	3
Primary biliary cirrhosis	GM12878	6	4	$6.0 \times 10^{-7}$	0.03	0	11	41	0	0	0	0	8	8
Systemic lupus erythematosus	GM12878	18	6	$9.0 \times 10^{-7}$	0.03	0	4	21	0	5	8	0	3	5
Lipoprotein cholesterol/triglycerides	HepG2	18	5	$1.2 \times 10^{-6}$	0.03	17	8	0	24	3	6	4	3	3
Haematological traits	K562	39	7	$1.7 \times 10^{-6}$	0.03	0	12	10	2	1	0	0	1	0
Haematological parameters	K562	28	6	$2.2 \times 10^{-6}$	0.03	0	15	7	0	5	7	7	3	2
Colorectal cancer	HepG2	4	3	$3.8 \times 10^{-6}$	0.03	0	0	0	66	0	12	0	12	12
Blood pressure	K562	9	4	$5.0 \times 10^{-6}$	0.04	0	30	14	0	10	6	7	5	11

# GWAS of neuroblastoma 2007

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



Università di Napoli "Federico II" DMMBM- CEINGE

# Genetic Etiology of NBL

- 99% of cases sporadic
  - Genetic etiology not known

Hypothesis: Neuroblastoma is a complex genetic disease that results from the interaction of variant alleles with relatively low to moderate effect on tumor initiation

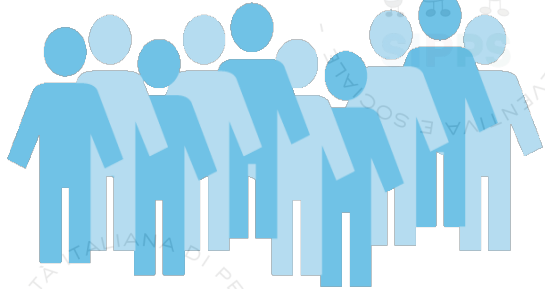
Experiment: Genome-wide association study comparing neuroblastoma cases to children without cancer as controls

# GWAS of neuroblastoma

**USA**

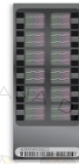
**Cases**

*Children affected  
by neuroblastoma*



5.000 constitutional DNAs

**vs.**



Illumina CHIP

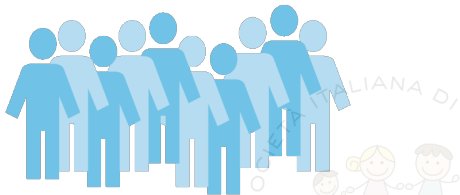
**Controls**

*Healthy subjects*



10.000 constitutional DNAs

**ITA**



500 constitutional DNAs



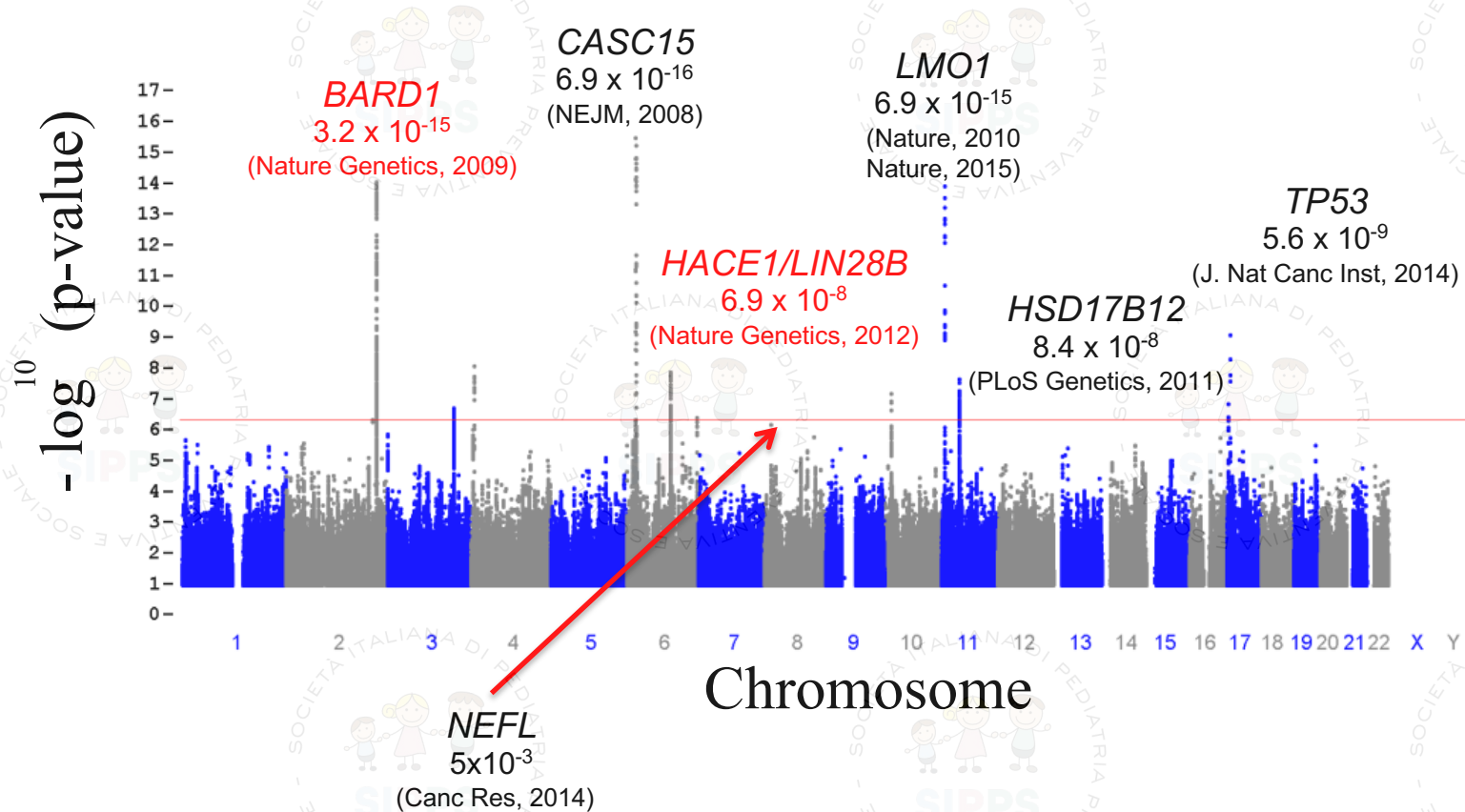
RealTime PCR  
genotyping



1000 constitutional DNAs

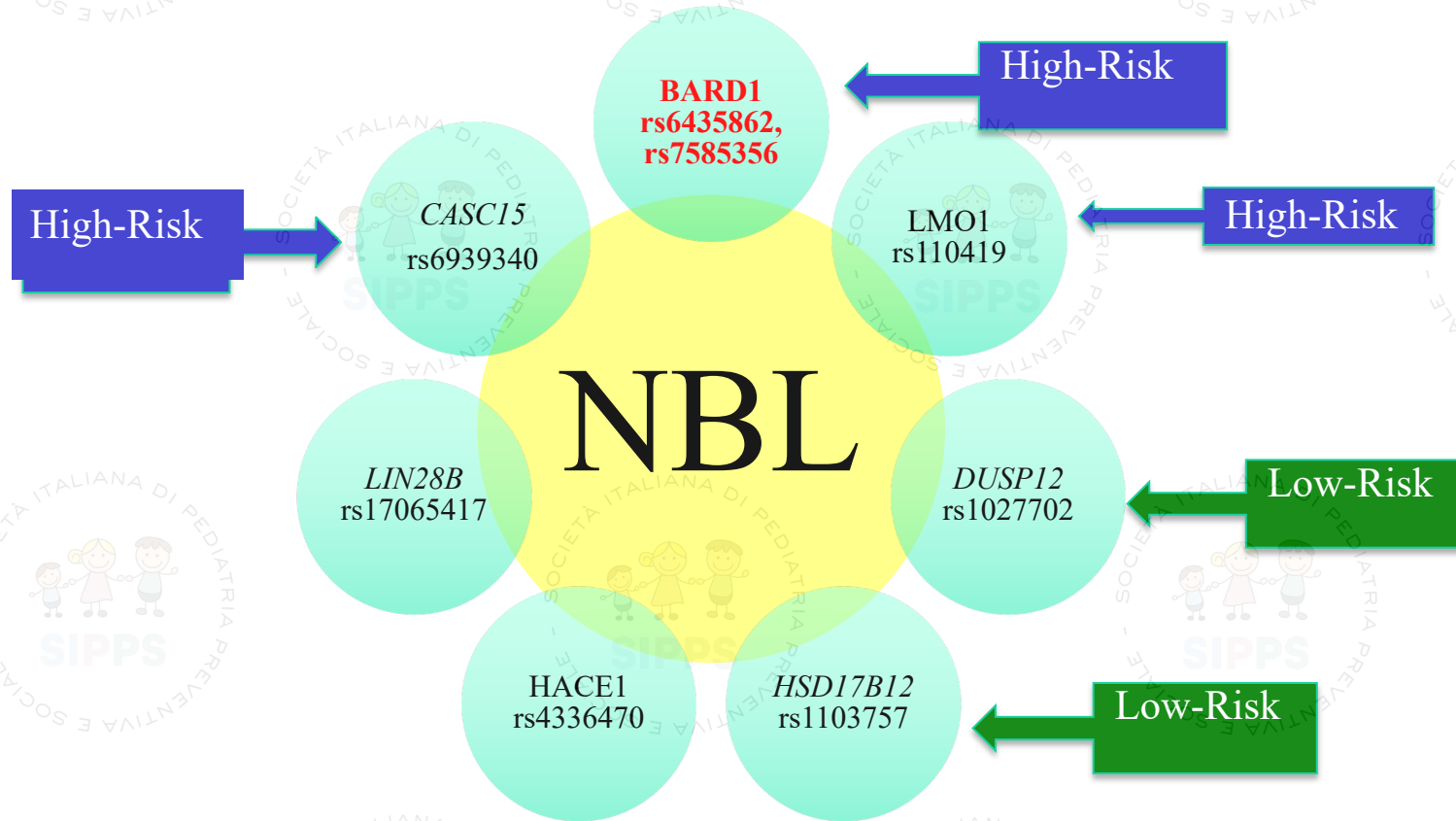
# Neuroblastoma susceptibility loci

2,101 cases and 4,202 genetically matched controls  
(European ancestry)





## Replication of GWAS-identified neuroblastoma risk loci strengthens the role of *BARD1* and affirms the cumulative effect of genetic variations on disease susceptibility



7 independent NB-associated SNPs robustly validated in Italian population

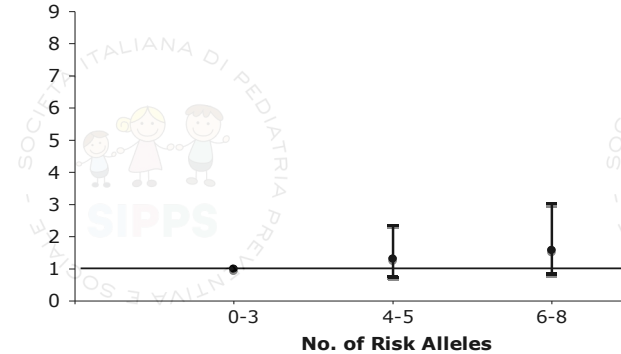
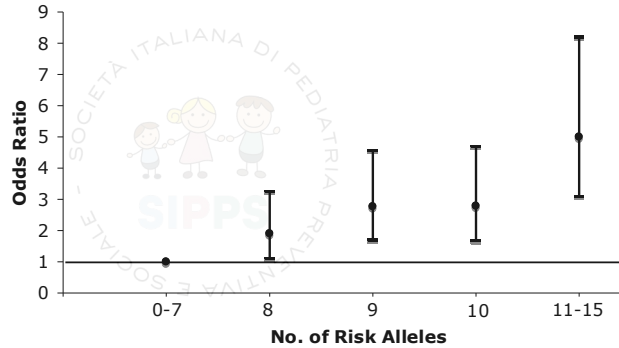
350 cases and 800 controls

# Cumulative effect of genetic variations on disease susceptibility

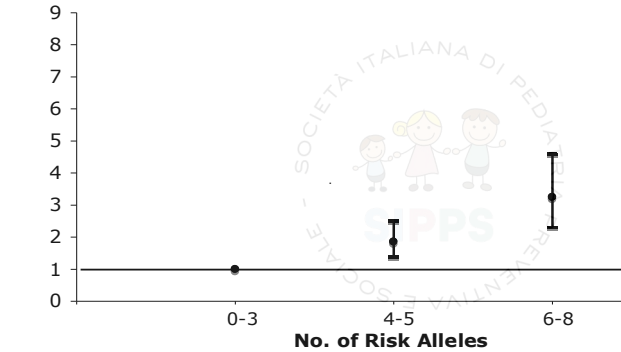
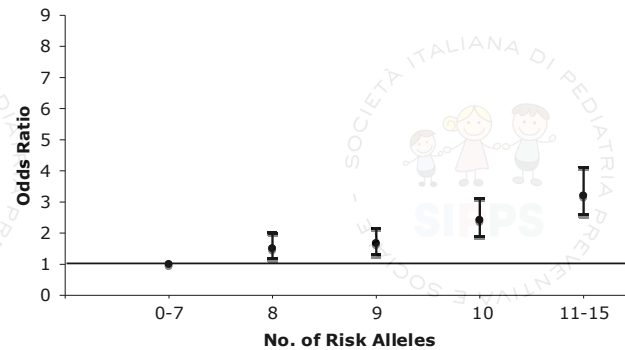
## Case vs. Control

## High- risk vs. Not High- risk

Italians



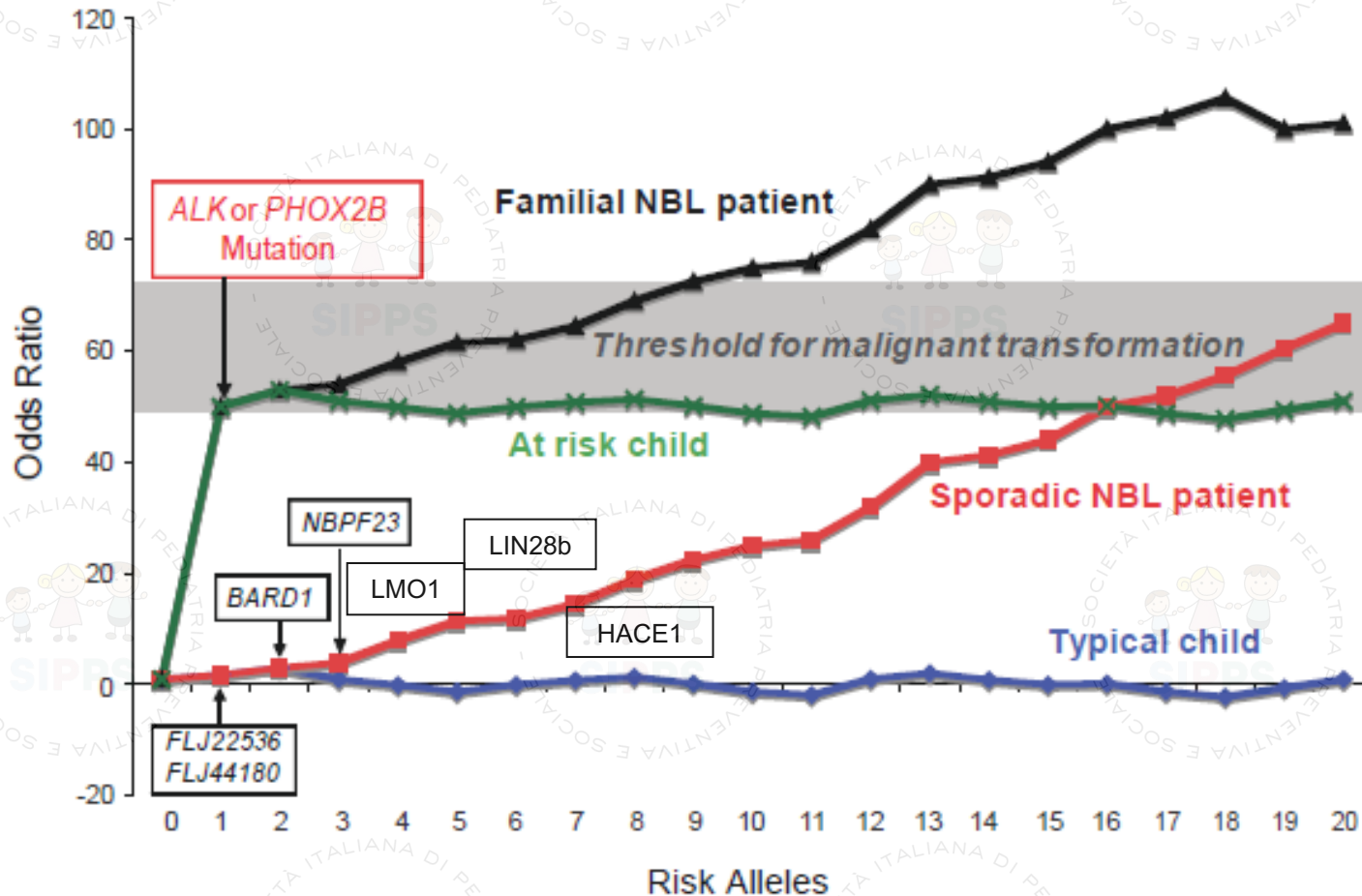
European Americans



The risk of neuroblastoma increases with increasing of number of risk genetic variants

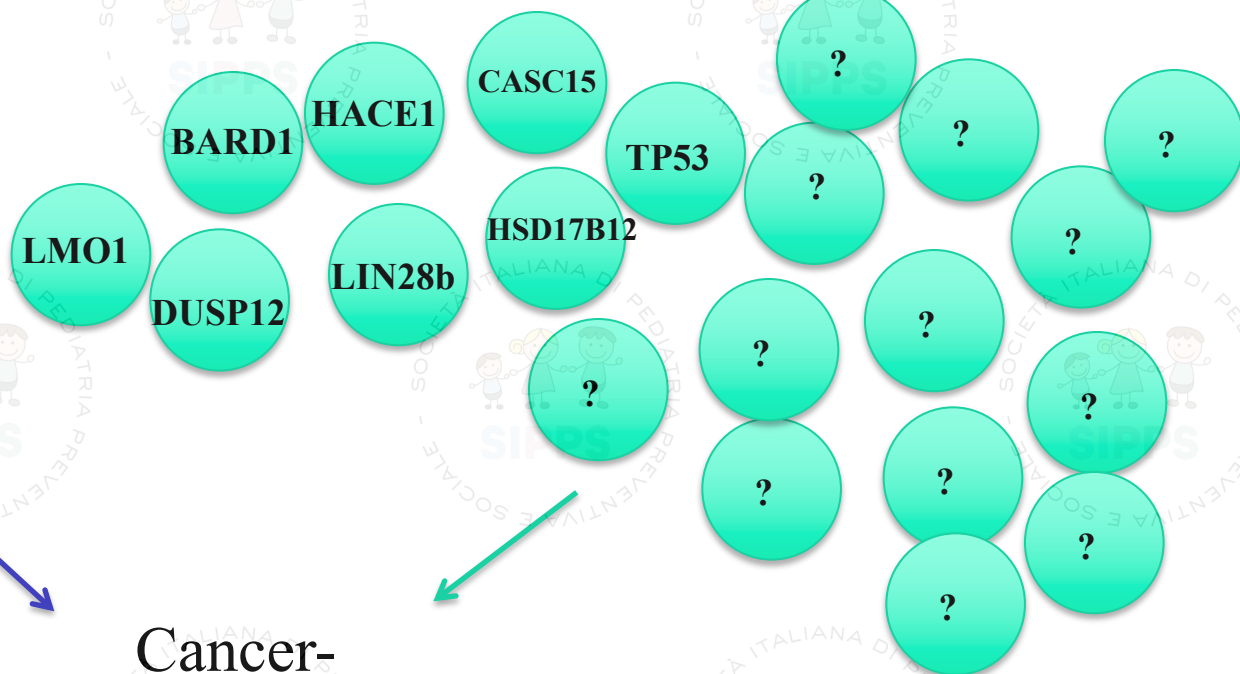
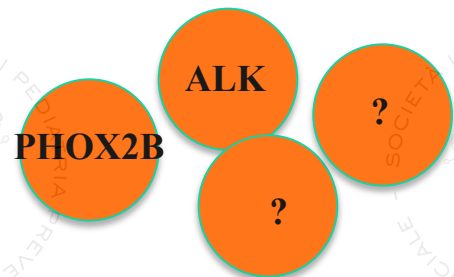
Capasso et al., 2013 Carcinogenesis

# Genetic Model of Sporadic Neuroblastoma



# Sporadic NB: POLYGENIC INHERITANCE

## Familial NB: MONOGENIC DEFECTS

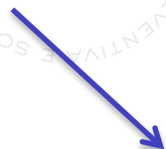


Environmental factors

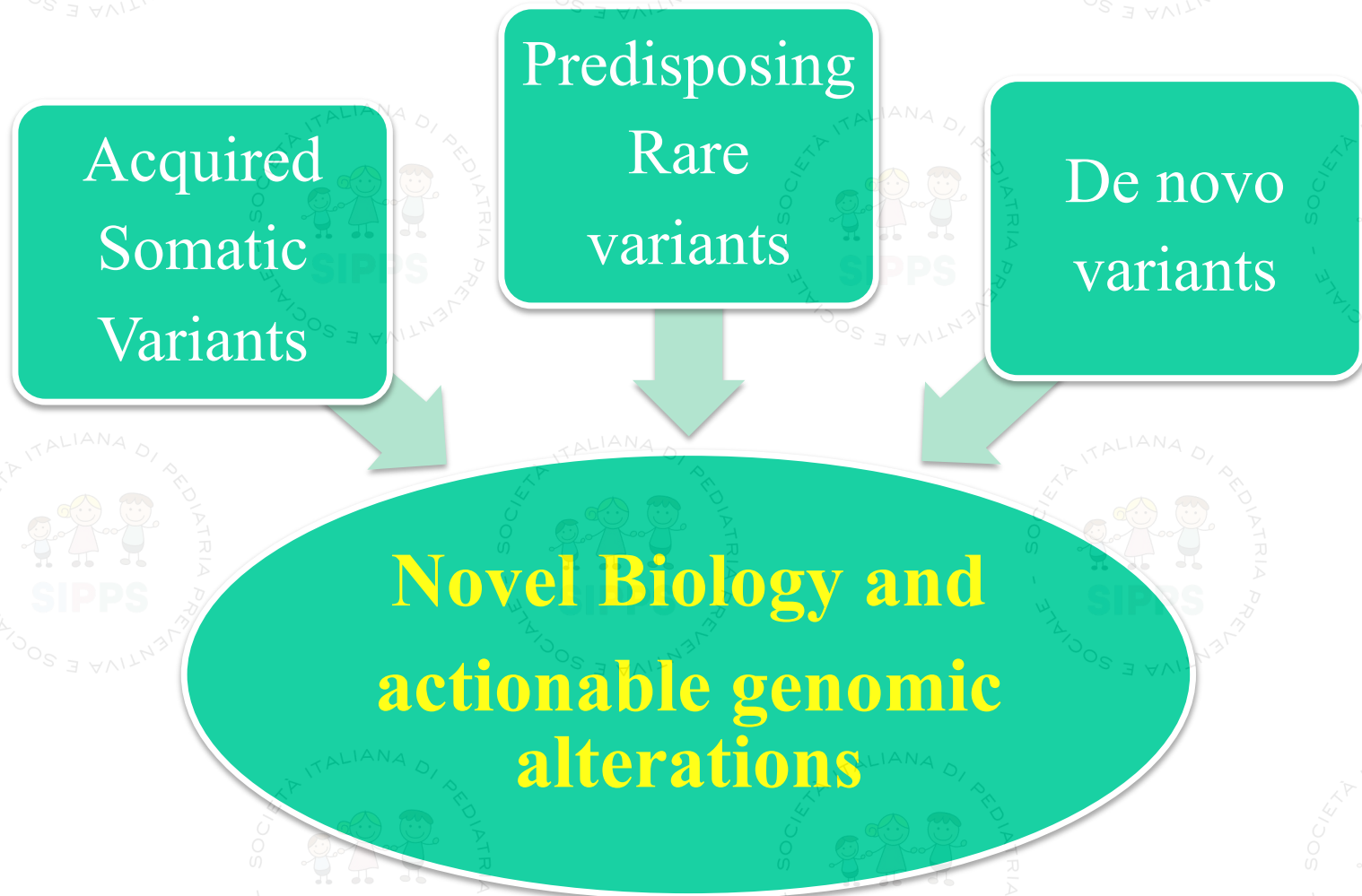
Cancer-prone condition

Somatic Mutations

Neuroblastoma



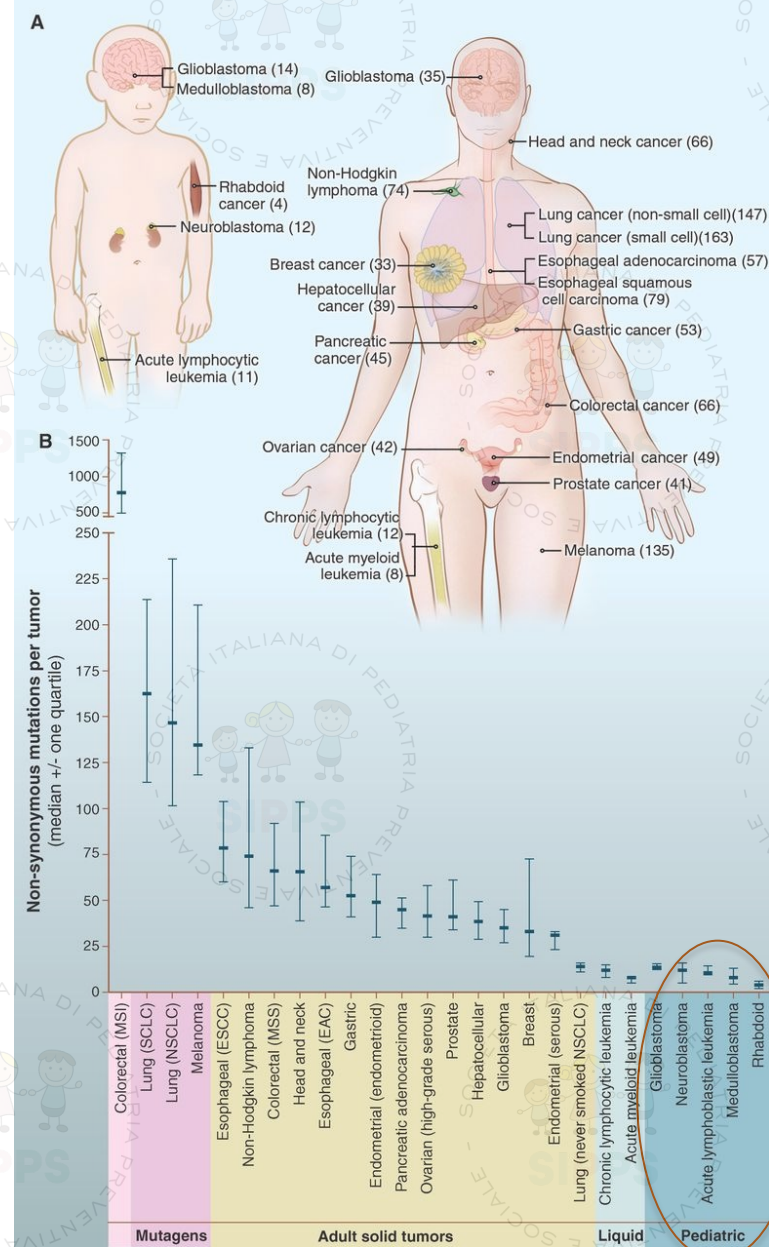
# Next Generation Sequencing of neuroblastoma



# Number of somatic mutations in representative human cancers, detected by genome-wide sequencing studies

In pediatric tumors:

1. Low rate mutations
2. Only genes, frequently mutated, have been discovered
3. Larger role of germline variants in cancer pediatric



# NGS studies of **primary** Neuroblastoma demonstrate

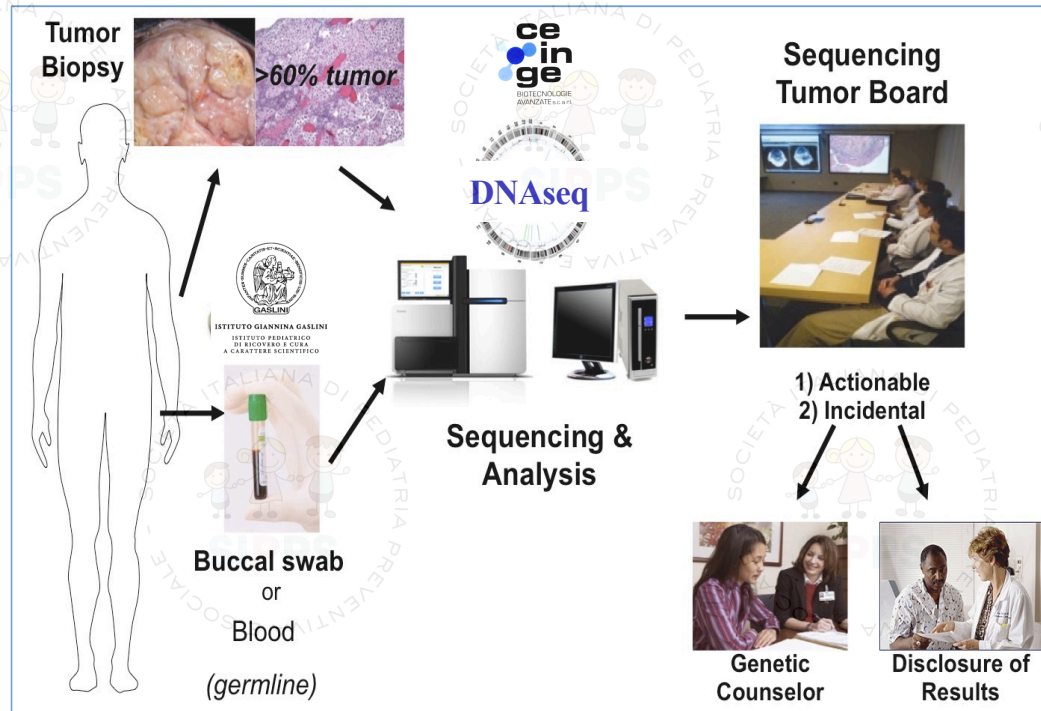
- Low rate of somatic mutations
- Few genes frequently mutated (10-20%)  
across patients

# Exome Sequencing of relapsed/high-risk neuroblastoma

Find patients eligible for novel treatments based on the somatic mutation

## Molecular Tumor Board

- oncologists
- genetics
- pathologists
- biologists
- bioinformaticians
- genetic counselors





# 8 ALK mutations in 27 relapsed/refractory NB

2018-2021

- Hot-spot mutation **F1174L** in 6 patients
- Less frequent mutation **R1275Q** in 1 patient
- Novel pathogenic mutation **S104R** in 1 patient

MTB recommendations were delivered in 43 days (range: 31 to 96 days), including the time for DNA preparation, for sequencing and bioinformatic analyses.

-5 patients received crizotinib (3 patients died before starting treatment) in combination with chemotherapy and 2 in monotherapy

-All patients showed a clinical improvement, and one had a CR after 2 cycles of combined treatment

# Case 1

Published in final edited form as:  
*J Neurooncol.* 2018 May ; 138(1): 199–207. doi:10.1007/s11060-018-2791-y.

Phase I Trial of Dasatinib, Lenalidomide, and Temozolomide in  
Children with Relapsed or Refractory Central Nervous System  
Tumors

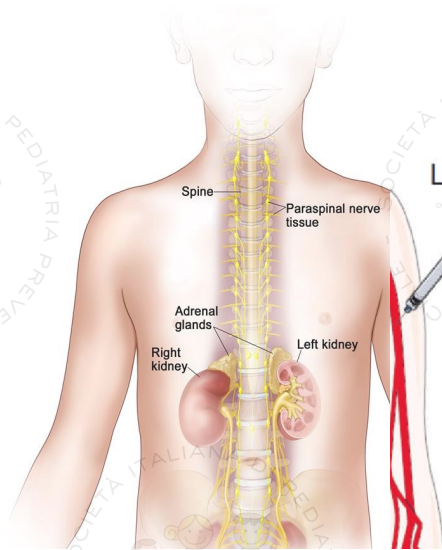
- 3-year-old male with early relapsed NB
- G320C in CUL4A gene -> Lenalidomide mieloma multiplo, sindromi mielodisplasiche
- Lenalidomide at the dose of 25 mg daily for 21 days every 28 days together with temozolomide at the dose of 250 mg daily for 5 days every 28 days
- The patient experienced **good clinical conditions until the end of the 3th cycle** when a headache recurred . Gadolinium-enhanced brain MRI showed **disease progression**. Clinical conditions rapidly worsened, the patient did not respond to treatment and died.
- The combination of temozolomide and lenalidomide was well tolerated in term of hematologic toxicity.

## Case 2

- 20 year-old male who relapsed 10 years after the first diagnosis of NB
- c.A484G in the PSMC2 gene ->Bortezomib (inhibitor of proteasome)
- Off label target therapy with 3 cycles of Bortezomib and Irinotecan and 2 cycles of TEMIRI with standard treatment
- Patient is in complete remission

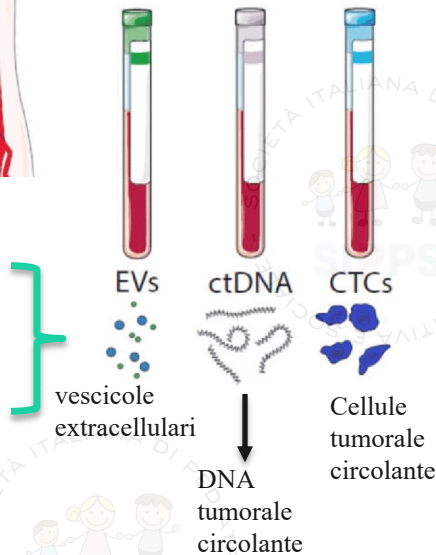
# Liquid Biopsy

Liquid biopsy for **label-free** detection of **“circulating tumor cells”** through digital **holographic microscopy** and **artificial intelligence**



Liquid biopsy - blood sample

**Monitoring:**  
-disease progression  
-treatment response



Dr. P. Ferraro

Stain-free identification of cell nuclei using tomographic phase microscopy in flow cytometry



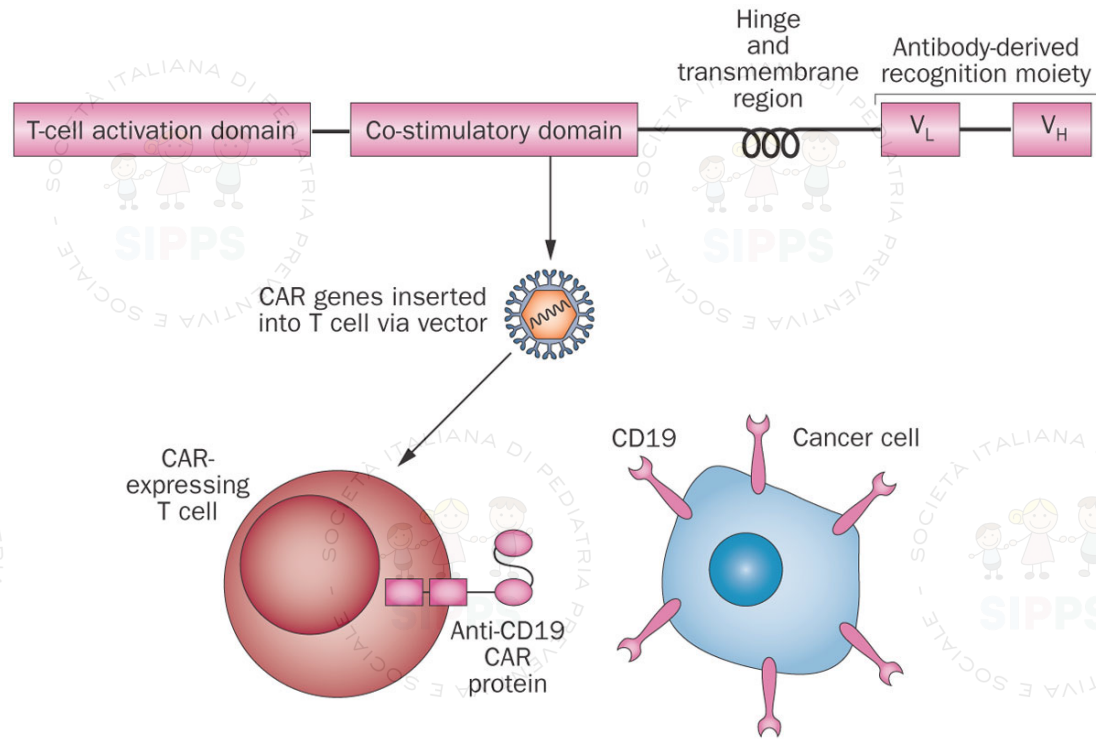
**A Targeted Gene Panel for Circulating Tumor DNA Sequencing in Neuroblastoma**

Flora Cimmino<sup>1†</sup>, Vito Alessandro Lasorsa<sup>1,2†</sup>, Simona Vetrella<sup>3</sup>, Achille Iolascon<sup>1,2</sup> and Mario Capasso<sup>1,2\*</sup>

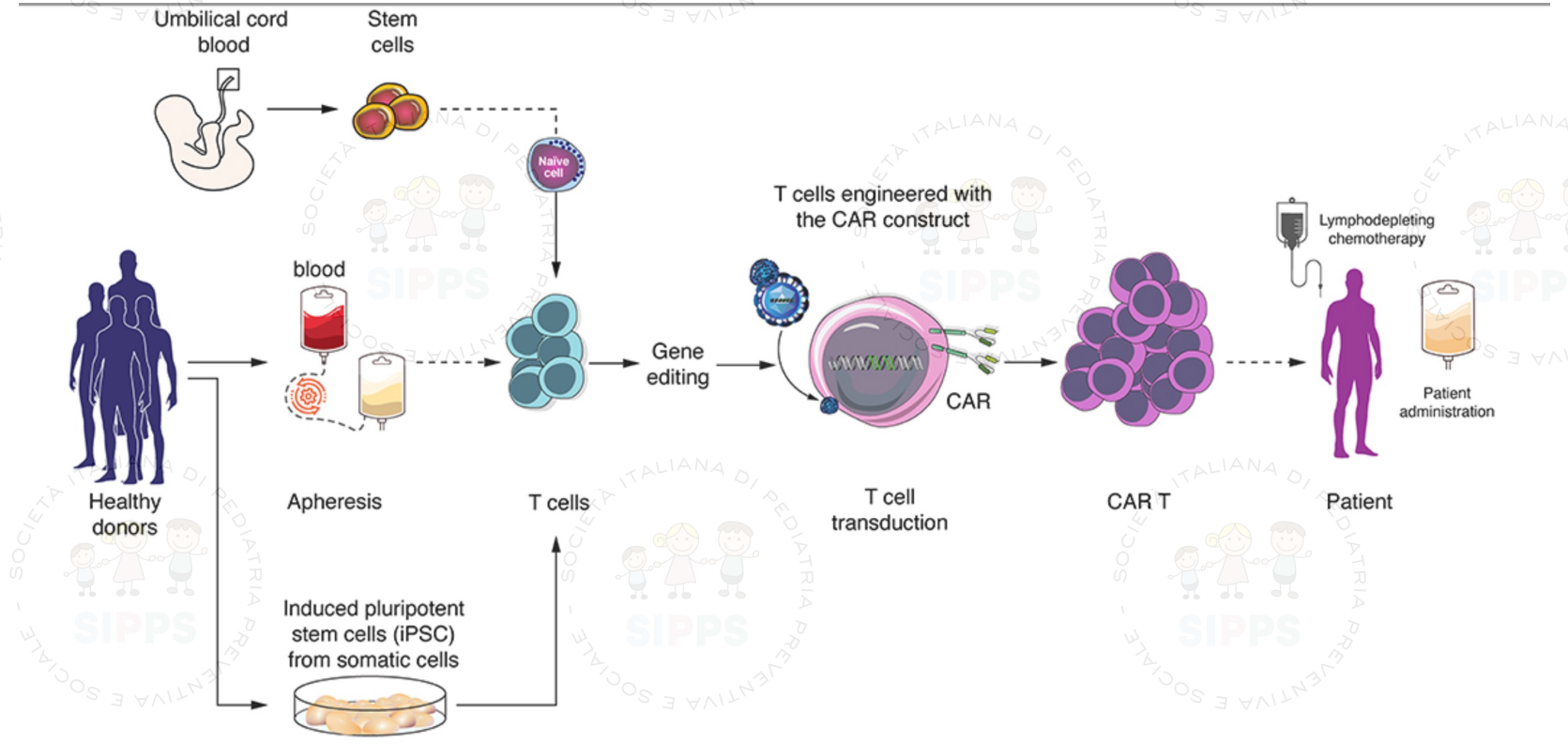
frontiers  
in Oncology

We developed a targeted NGS approach to identify tumor-specific alterations in ctDNA of neuroblastoma patients.

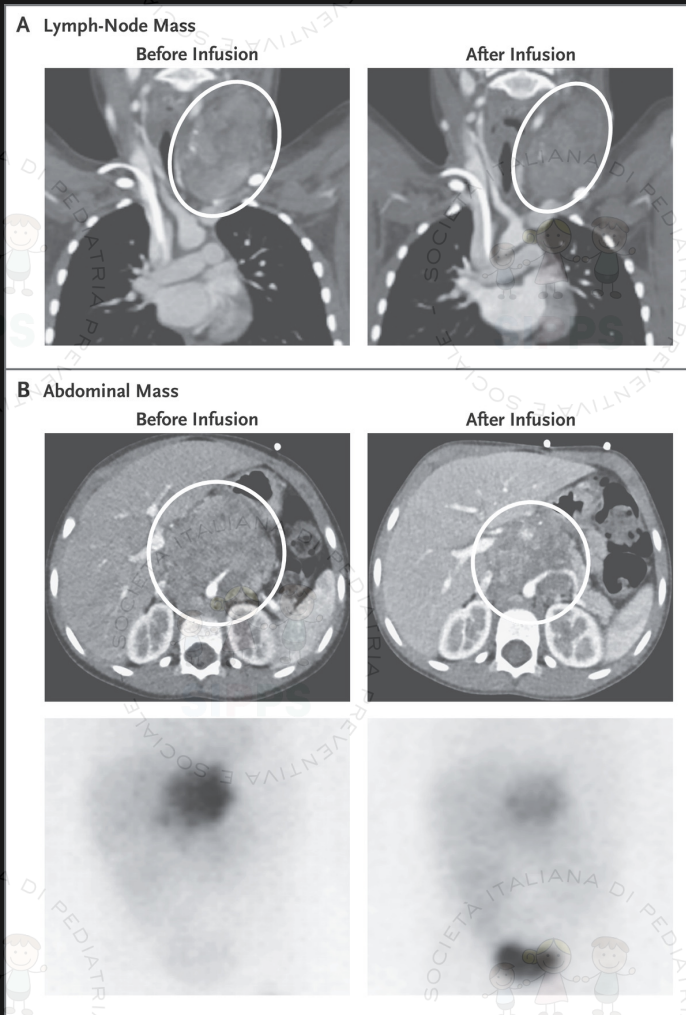
# Chimeric Antigen Receptors (CARs)



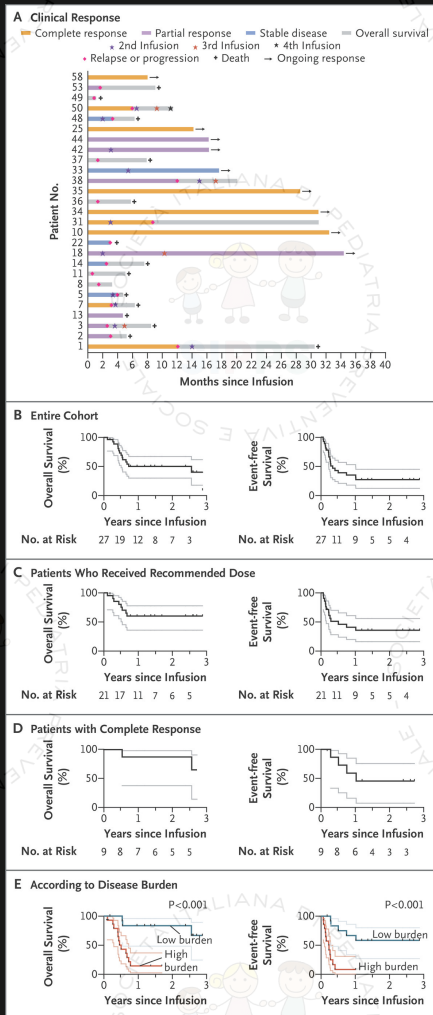
**Kochenderfer, J. N. & Rosenberg,  
S. A. (2013)  
*Nat. Rev. Clin. Oncol.***



# Radiologic Response in Two Patients with Bulky Disease.



# Long-Term Outcomes after GD2-CART01 Infusion.



Arruolati. 27 non-  
responders o recidivanti  
DOPO 30 MESI  
9 RISPOSTE COMPLETE  
8 RISPOSTE PARZIALI  
36% EVENT FREE  
SURVIVAL



# Lab group



# Prof. Mario Capasso

