“I Don’t Want to Be Alone!”

My name is Dagmar Pechová.

I used to be a corporate manager. Today, I’m a psychotherapist and a patient. In 2023, I was diagnosed with malignant thymoma, stage 3 to 4, subtype B2–B3.

When you are told you have a cancer, you're terrified. But for me, the worst part was being completely alone.

In the entire Czech Republic, there is not a single doctor involved in ITMIG. No patient group exists.

And yet, according to official statistics, in 2023 there are 347 people (prevalence) living in my country with this diagnosis or who have had it. But I don't know any of them.

I had to search for everything myself. On the internet, on Facebook, in foreign support groups, in scientific articles.

I consulted three different oncologists in my country for a second opinion. But none of them knew how to help. They all sent me back to my original clinic.

My oncologist is an experienced lady – perhaps the only one in the country who has worked with thymomas for many years. But I don’t know if she has access to current international knowledge. She doesn’t attend conferences and isn’t part of any global network.

The surgical team at the hospital where I had my operation is excellent. But they don’t have much experience with this type of rare tumor. After my first sternotomy, they told me they wouldn’t operate again – they didn’t feel confident enough.

I felt stuck. With no way forward. No support. No certainty that my treatment was really the best option.

So, I started searching elsewhere. I looked internationally. I talked to patients. I read studies. I even went to Fatima, in Portugal – to pray. It might sound strange, but when you're desperate, you hold on to anything that gives you hope.

And from that loneliness, strength was born. I decided – if no one in the Czech Republic speaks about thymoma, I will be the one to speak. I’m now founding the first Czech patient group. And I came here – to this conference – to connect with those who know more than I do. But more than that – I want to ask for something.

We need a clear strategy for patients in countries where there is no ITMIG representative. We need a point of contact. A process. A way to access expert advice.

So, patients don’t get lost. So, they don’t feel forgotten. I’m standing here after a long and difficult journey – during treatment. And I would like to ask you: If anyone here knows how to help me or would be willing to talk – please find me after this session.

Because I don’t want to be alone. And you could be the reason I’m not – not me, and not anyone else.