

The European Cancer Congress 2013 – The Largest Platform for Practice-changing Data in Europe

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The world-renowned biennial series of European Cancer Congresses are recognised as the premier multidisciplinary cancer meetings in Europe. The 17th ECCO – 38th ESMO – 32nd ESTRO European Cancer Congress, in Amsterdam from 27 September to 1 October 2013, will once again combine the united efforts of all partner organisations to continue positioning multidisciplinarity as the way forwards to best improve the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care of cancer patients.

The recognised multidisciplinary setting of the Congress, involving seven oncology organisations: the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO), the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO), the European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ESTRO), the European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), the European Society of Surgical Oncology (ESSO), the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) and the European Society for Pediatric Oncology (SIOPe), will provide ideal surroundings for participants to leverage knowledge, promote education and build awareness about oncology – placing the patient at the heart of all efforts and discussions. Thanks to this multidisciplinary collaboration, oncology professionals and patient advocates alike are able to see and learn from the tangible benefits of cancer disciplines working together.

Featuring the strongest and most forward-focused scientific programme to date, the 33 tracks span the entire oncology spectrum to showcase the latest developments in practice-changing studies of new and significant importance in oncology, guaranteeing a multiprofessional, multidisciplinary appeal. The European Cancer Congresses are the only multidisciplinary and multiprofessional educational meetings in oncology to take place in Europe – a fact that underpins the relevance, role and participation of each and every specialty in oncology.

Opening Ceremony

There is an exciting line-up of top experts in their fields participating at the opening event. A special guest lecture will be given by Suzanne Topalian at the Opening Ceremony. She is a renowned surgical oncologist with 21 years of experience at the Surgery Branch of the National Cancer Institute. Her talk is entitled: 'Mobilising the Immune System to Treat Cancer'. At the Opening Session, Hans Clevers will be discussing 'Lgr5 Stem Cells in self-renewal and cancer'; Bill Sellers will be focusing on 'The genetic basis for cancer therapy – the opportunity and the challenges' and Charlie Swanton will look at 'Intratumour heterogeneity and cancer evolution'.

Scientific Programme

This Congress will play a pivotal role in establishing standards for the future in Europe, and beyond. The acclaimed quality of the ECC 2013 Scientific Programme will offer breakthrough advances and insight into scientific and clinical research, patient management and practice through an outstanding range of scientific and educational symposia, special sessions, teaching lectures, workshops and legendary 'heated' Oxford-style debates.

The *Radiobiology/Radiation Physics/Radiotherapy Track* will promote and advance multidisciplinary networking and oncopolicy through a comprehensive, active and strategic partnership with national and international policymakers, healthcare management, industrial and corporate partners and other professional oncology societies. It will also showcase top translational and multidisciplinary management of different tumour sites based on evidence, several oncopolicy topics and scientific sessions with varied modalities from debates and symposia through to teaching lectures.

The *Surgical Oncology Track* will cover all aspects of the investigation and treatment of the common solid cancers that form the workload of cancer surgeons. In addition to the many proffered papers from all oncology disciplines, there will be symposia, debates and presentations that touch on all aspects of surgical oncology and the diseases seen by surgical oncologists. There will be dedicated symposia on minimally invasive cancer surgery, surgery for neuroendocrine (NET) liver metastases, the impact of centralisation of complex cancer surgery on outcomes, metastatic pancreatic cancer, oncoplastic breast cancer surgery and surgery's role in the management of hepatocellular carcinoma.

Topics of interest to medical oncologists suffuse the programme, such as: 'Targeting the microenvironment' in the *Basic Science Track*; 'Optimal use of targeted kinase inhibitors (TKIs)' in the *Drug Development Track*; 'How next generation sequencing is changing therapeutic decision making' in the *Diagnostics/Biomarkers Track*; and 'Interrogating minimal residual disease: What is new?' in the *Translational Research Track*.

Other Programme Highlights

Modern medicine has to a large extent been transformed by tremendous developments witnessed within industry and technology, as well as cancer management and research in recent decades. That is why the

Oncotechnology Track has been carefully structured to facilitate critical discussions between medical physicists, biomedical engineers, cancer scientists, clinicians and other stakeholders, providing a platform for emerging technologies and their potential impact on cancer diagnostics, therapy and research.

The *Education Track* covers one of the cornerstones of good cancer treatment and care, including state-of-the-art guidelines for different disease stages of frequent tumour types such as breast, colorectal and lung cancer, as well as less frequent cancers. With a growing emphasis on how best to tackle advanced disease in cancer patients, Educational Symposia are the must-attend sessions in this respect.

The *Oncopolicy Track* is regarded as the forum for guiding evidence-based policymaking in Europe. At Amsterdam, the Track will continue to gather all stakeholders to address and tackle matters of prime importance to the European cancer community head-on, as well as promote and foster continued improvement at EU level. The Track's theme *Oncopolicy 2020* is set to stimulate debate around the hottest topics affecting all cancer stakeholders.

Similarly, both the *Patient Advocacy/Ethics Track* and the *Oncology Nursing Track* are fully integrated within the core Scientific Programme to ensure full participation of all disciplines on topics of shared concern to cancer patients, advocates and professionals alike. This also enables participation of cancer nurses in all programme sessions, a crucial step for identifying future directions aimed at improved patient care across Europe.

The *Regulatory Track* includes a number of highly relevant sessions and talking points, including: 'The dilemma of cross-over in clinical trial design of agents of obvious activity', 'Outcome measures in clinical trial design' and 'Cancer pharmaceutics', as well as the debate entitled: 'The EU Directive has harmed European Clinical studies'.

The *Young Oncologists Track* emphasises the importance of catering to the needs of young physicians, practitioners and scientists – critical for the development of the next generation of cancer research and treatment specialists. It includes sessions such as 'How to be a happy oncologist' and the 'Integration of genetic information into daily practice'. Wider, career-orientated support and information to help shape and encourage the interests and future work of young oncologists, is often lacking at congresses, as is mentoring and guidance from experienced scientists in avoiding mistakes that they themselves have made during their own career learning curve. That



is why young oncology mentorship sessions given by José Baselga, Sarah Faithfull, Peter Naredi, Graeme Poston, Jean-Charles Soria and Vincenzo Valentini are being offered for the first time at the ECC 2013, to help bridge this gap.

New Data

The best discussions are also triggered by abstracts. Some of the best new data in Europe and beyond will be showcased at the ECC 2013. An extensive amount of new data will feature as proffered papers – regular abstracts have increased by 38 percent since the 2011 Congress in Stockholm – and there is no doubt that stimulating and influential dialogue will emerge as a direct result.

Late-breaking abstracts will form the core of the Presidential Sessions in Amsterdam, as well as featuring in proffered paper sessions. The number of oral presentation slots has increased to provide a leading showcase for these latest developments in practice-changing studies of new and significant scientific importance. These data will help accelerate the promise of personalised medicine, impact directly on our patients through more effective prevention strategies, earlier diagnosis and better treatment modalities, as well as succeed in bringing cutting-edge data back to Europe.

A comprehensive, stimulating, rigorous and highly educational scientific experience, irrespective of participants' roles or focus in oncology is guaranteed for all participants. The 17th ECCO, 38th ESMO, 32nd ESTRO European Cancer Congress forms the foremost milestone on the world congress agenda in progressing the fight against cancer through the multidisciplinary approach. ■