



About the EORTC

The EORTC (European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer) is an international organization under Belgian Law which was founded in 1962 by a number of leading European cancer specialists.

The aims of the EORTC are to:

- (1) Conduct, develop, coordinate and stimulate research in Europe on the experimental and clinical bases of cancer treatment and related problems, with the final goal being to develop optimal therapeutic strategies in order to improve the standards of cancer treatment in Europe. The goal is not only a reduction in the mortality rate of cancer patients but also an improvement in their quality of life.
- (2) Make better use of existing health care resources through an evaluation of the cost effectiveness of different therapeutic approaches.
- (3) Decrease the time needed to evaluate new therapeutic modalities with an improved coordination of multidisciplinary clinical research.
- (4) Disseminate state-of-the-art knowledge in oncology among practitioners and hospitals in Europe in order to improve the quality of cancer treatment.
- (5) Promote education in cancer treatment, data management and clinical trial methodology.

The EORTC currently coordinates the research of about 2000 medical doctors located in more than 300 university hospitals in 31 countries.

Indeed, extensive and comprehensive research in this wide field is often beyond the means of individual European laboratories and hospitals, and can best be accomplished through multidisciplinary, multinational efforts of research scientists as well as clinicians.

The ultimate goal of the EORTC is to improve the standard of cancer treatment in Europe through the development of new drugs as well as the testing of new therapeutic regimens including state-of-the-art therapeutic strategies using drugs which are already commercially available or surgery and radiotherapy.

Through the conduct of large prospective randomized multicenter cancer clinical trials, the EORTC facilitates the passage of experimental discoveries into state-of-the-art treatment for all cancer patients and not only those treated in research-oriented institutions.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death and although over the past 50 years considerable progress has been made in the field of medical research, there is a crucial need for pursuing high quality cancer research; further progress in the treatment of cancer requires convincing clinical trials performed in a comprehensive manner, including quality of life evaluation and health economics assessments.

The EORTC is the only organization which coordinates high quality multinational clinical trials on a truly European level; therefore, the results of those trials are widely applicable and have maximal impact for all European countries.

There are about 30 different groups of physicians working on a voluntary basis within the framework and carrying out research that would be difficult to realize on a national level.

Pre-clinical and early clinical evaluation of new compounds are coordinated by the

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EORTC New Drug Development Office based in Amsterdam, while late phase II and III trials, and specific studies including quality of life, health economics evaluation and meta-analysis are coordinated through the EORTC Data Center based in Brussels.

With the support of the Education Office, the Education and Training Division of the EORTC organizes courses and exchange programs for cancer specialists throughout Europe in close cooperation with the European School of Oncology (ESO, Milan).

The *European Journal of Cancer* is the official journal of the EORTC.

In 1972, the US National Cancer Institute created a NCI Liaison office adjacent to the EORTC headquarters in Brussels in order to increase transatlantic cooperation and to coordinate research efforts.

High quality clinical research is vital in order to offer the highest standards of care to all European cancer patients and 10% more would be cured by applying what we have already learned from clinical research to all those patients. Therefore, European strategy for cancer research should contribute to the effective reduction of cancer death numbers and to increased cancer treatment efficacy.

The EORTC provides such effective clinical research leading to independent and objective evaluation to obtain valid and convincing data on cancer management.

An EORTC fellowship program has been established to foster the exchange of physicians and scientists, and also to promote training of young medical doctors as well as biostatisticians, health economists and specialists in quality of life and in the methodology of cancer clinical research.

Such an approach also provides a rapid diffusion of results of clinical trials and promotes their implementation on a Europe-wide basis with a significant impact on clinical practice.

Each year, the EORTC publishes the results of its activities in more than 40 papers in scientific journals and more than 80 communications are presented at international scientific meetings.

Over the past 4 years, a major expansion of quality assurance activities has been realized; quality control on an EORTC level is assured through the activities of the Protocol Review Committee, the Quality Control Committee and the Scientific Audit Committee with active participation of medical monitors. A Quality Assurance Unit has also recently been established at the EORTC Data Center.

Through its network of investigators, the EORTC offers the pharmaceutical industry a comprehensive drug development and testing program covering the entire range of studies from early drug discovery to phase III–IV clinical studies.

During the last few years, several new groups have been created to address new clinically relevant issues in oncology including Invasive Fungal Infections, Neoplasia in the Elderly, Ophthalmic Oncology, Biological Response Modifiers, Continuing Medical Education, PET, Pain and Symptoms Control as well as Pathology.

Overall, the EORTC offers an integrated approach to develop more effective treatment strategies in Europe.

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