

Plenary Session

ESMO Award Lecture

1284

The changing landscape of breast cancer clinical research

Martine J. Piccart. *Institute Jules Bordet, Brussels, Belgium*

Clinical research for breast cancer is moving in 3 new directions following:

- (1) A critical analysis of three decades of randomized clinical trials for early disease.
- (2) Increasing awareness of this lethal disease among women, generating women's associations which are pressing for improved breast cancer education, screening and treatment.
- (3) An exponential growth in our understanding of breast cancer molecular biology, leading to a number of innovative therapies with new targets in the cancer cell or its environment.

It is the remarkable work of the Oxford Group which has finally vindicated the use of our 3 main weapons against breast cancer micro-metastases, namely tamoxifen, chemotherapy and ovarian ablation. There is now consensus that clinical research in the adjuvant setting may gain speed and efficiency through intergroup collaboration. Such an "Intergroup" has been recently created in Europe and will collaborate with the American-Canadian Intergroup.

Women's associations have only recently stepped forward to demand better care, and more effective therapies: they are becoming new partners in identifying critical issues in breast cancer research.

Medical oncologists involved in breast cancer research are facing a new challenge: the optimal integration of traditional breast cancer therapies, namely endocrine treatments and chemotherapy, and entirely new strategies targeting signal transduction, apoptosis or angiogenesis.

In view of the above, there is no doubt that we are entering a new and exciting era in breast cancer clinical research.

Special Lecture

1285

Europath: A European network supporting communication and database resources in oncopathology

G. Brugal. *Institut Albert Bonniot, Faculté de Médecine, Université Joseph, Fourier, Grenoble, France*

In the framework of the European initiatives to promote telematics for health care, the EUROPATH project has been launched to develop specific tools for the overall community of diagnosticians in two directions:

- (1) the integration of multimedia telecommunication between pathologists to improve quality assurance, diagnostic accuracy and cost efficiency of screening, diagnosis and prognosis of cancer. In this respect, the Project has provided the inter-operable tools for remote consultation of experts, consensus diagnostic through microscope tele-conferencing, and remote quantitation of biological markers;
- (2) the integration of multimedia European databases for collecting case reports, reference images and quantitation of biological markers through the network and given well defined quality control procedures and peer reviewing. The exploitation of the stored information is designed having in mind routine practice, education, clinical trials and basic research. The project will establish compatibility and inter-operability between the major European manufacturers of microscope and designers of imaging workstations and will issue the medical protocols and guidelines to support the set-up of telemedicine European services dedicated to onco-pathology.