

Wednesday, 30 September 1998**08:30-09:15****OPENING CEREMONY****Emmanuel van der Schueren Lecture****1****INVITED****Changing concepts in breast cancer management**

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The new concepts of treatment result from new knowledge about the natural history of breast cancer and from the fact that patient population is changing. Genetic studies have shown that breast cancer progresses from a very well differentiated form to a more aggressive one. Chemopreventive measures (tamoxifen, raloxifen) have shown a clear possibility of preventing breast carcinoma in a good proportion of women at high risk. On the other hand, imaging techniques are able to detect very minimal cases and today 25% of patients have non-palpable tumours and more than 50% are classified T1. These changes have revitalised methods for effective non-mutilating local treatments. Axillary dissection is likely to be performed only in sentinel node positive patients and preoperative chemotherapy is likely to be expanded. Timing of surgery according to menstrual phases, is under investigation. Systemic treatments are becoming used more and more frequently and research into low-toxicity combination of drugs, high dose treatments and predictors of chemosensitivity is in progress.