

Introduction

On behalf of the European Cancer Organisation (ECCO), I am pleased to present the Education Book of The 2011 European Multidisciplinary Cancer Congress. The educational programme of this conference has been developed through the joint efforts of the scientific and educational committees of ECCO.

This Education Book covers several topics: from screening to the treatment of metastatic disease in major sites, i.e. breast, lung, prostate and colorectal cancer. Attention is given to the fundamental scientific findings that are leading to new targeted approaches in the clinic. It is fascinating to see how nowadays more and more knowledge of the molecular biological characteristics of the tumour lead to individualisation with surgery, radiotherapy and systemic treatment for patients with a malignancy.

In the chapter “*Screening for cancer: sense and sensibilities*” the possibilities of screening to detect cancer at an early and treatable stage are presented for breast, prostate, colon and lung cancer. The potential benefits and negative effects are addressed as well as the issue of overdiagnosis.

The chapter on “*Dealing with children of cancer patients*” describes the psychological impact of the treatment of a parent on his or her child, as well as data on malformation or cancer in the offspring following *in utero* exposure from diagnostic procedures and treatment. The consequences of the individualisation of treatment choices during pregnancy are addressed.

The chapter on “*Metastatic breast cancer: What do the different treatment modalities add to survival?*” reveals the impact of biological diversity on the disease and how this affects the treatment of these patients. It shows how an individual approach is now becoming a reality, with multidisciplinary treatment including surgery, radiotherapy and systemic therapy tailored to each patient’s tumour characteristics.

“*The jungle of treatments in advanced colorectal cancer*” discusses the controversy regarding surgery for advanced cases. This chapter reminds us that we still have to continue with our efforts to perform prospective clinical trials in patients with advanced colorectal cancer. Fortunately, the status of gene mutations is providing us with more guidelines for treatment of the individual patient.

The chapter “*Optimal treatment for advanced ovarian cancer*” describes the role of surgery in advanced disease and presents information on the possibilities of targeted therapy in ovarian cancer based upon molecular alterations; for example, targeting the base excision repair (BER) pathway with PARP inhibitors is promising.

“*2010 Consensus on Lung Cancer: new clinical recommendations and status of biomarker assessment*” reviews the recommendations for biomarker testing and first- and second-line systemic treatment of non-small-cell and small-cell lung cancer.

The chapter “*Medical treatment of metastatic prostate cancer*” is again an excellent example of how recent progress in the knowledge of pathways and physiopathology has changed the treatment of metastatic prostate cancer.

This educational event is made available through the efforts of many people. I wish to thank all the presenters participating in this Educational Symposium who have provided their valuable expertise. Simona Androni from the ECCO office is thanked in particular for preparing this Education Book.

I hope you will enjoy, as much as I did, reading the interesting papers in this book from the Educational Symposia of The 2011 European Multidisciplinary Cancer Congress in Stockholm.

Harry Bartelink

Scientific Editor, The 2011 European Multidisciplinary Cancer Congress, Education Book