

Factsheet: European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO)

About ESGO

ESGO is an independent not-for-profit scientific society which was founded in 1983 by Professor Onnis, an esteemed Italian cancer expert, as a forum for healthcare professionals dedicated to the care of women with gynaecological cancer. The ultimate aim of ESGO is to improve the survival and quality of life of women by contributing to the prevention, treatment and study of gynaecological cancer and education professionals worldwide.

To support the achievement of its aims ESGO holds a biennial Gynaecological Oncology Meeting, publishes the international *Journal of Gynecological Cancer* (IJGC), has set up formal guidelines of training in gynaecological oncology and runs European hospital accreditation. Annually ESGO organises numerous educational workshops with special emphasis on European countries where facilities and education is lacking, and also provides travelling fellowships to enhance communication and mobility within different European institutions and long-term clinical and research grants. In addition, ESGO operates ENGOT, a pan-European Network of Gynaecological Oncological Trial groups, which coordinates and promotes national and regional clinical trials within Europe, and established ENYGO, the European Network of Young Gynaecological Oncologists, to shape the future of female cancer research and treatment.

More recently ESGO launched ESGO-FORUM.org; an interactive information sharing website, and 'ESGO 2009 e-Series'; an exclusive series of downloadable presentations given by internationally-renowned speakers aiming to address specialised issues of clinical importance in gynaecological oncology.

ESGO's Mission Statement

- To improve the health and well-being of European women suffering from gynaecological cancers
- To improve research into the prevention, early detection, quality of life and treatment of women with gynaecological cancers
- To achieve high standards of professional care throughout Europe for women suffering from gynaecological cancers by
 - Promoting relevant educational activities and improving training for specialists
 - Providing a Europe-wide supervised standard for both the certified training of gynaecological-oncologists and for healthcare centres that specialise in the treatment of gynaecological-oncology related conditions
 - Setting up multidisciplinary standards of care for women with gynaecological cancers and acting as an European authority in the field
 - Promoting communication between relevant European and worldwide scientific and professional organisations and societies
 - Promoting public awareness of gynaecological cancers and their prevention and treatments
 - Facilitating academic research into gynaecological cancers

ESGO Council

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International Journal of Gynecological Cancer

Uziel Beller, Editor-in-Chief

Gillian Thomas, Associate-Editor-in-Chief

ENYGO (European Network of Young Gynaecological Oncologists)

ESGO also has a junior member, Dr Murat Gultekin, on its executive council to represent the young gynaecological oncologists.

ENGOT (European Network of Gynaecological Oncologist Trial Groups)

Ignace Vergote, Belgium

Andreas du Bois, Germany

ESGO biennial conference

The ESGO conference is held every two years and has become a landmark scientific event in the world of gynaecological oncology. This year marks the 16th meeting, which is taking place in Belgrade, Serbia from 11th - 14th October. The meeting is expected to attract more than 1,700 physicians, researchers and clinicians from across Europe, providing them with an opportunity to discuss, debate, and disseminate new medical and scientific information on gynaecological cancer treatment and care.

The scientific programme will focus on the progressive changes in the approach to gynaecological cancer in recent years, particularly the significant advances made in human papillomavirus (HPV) research.

This year the main topics include:

- Cervical cancer and vaccination
- Prevention of HPV-related diseases
- Prevention of gynaecological cancer
- Diagnostics
- Vaginal and vulva cancer
- Endometrial cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Trophoblastic diseases
- Breast cancer
- Fertility sparing in gynaecological cancer
- Palliative care
- Quality of life after treatment of gynaecological cancer
- Organisation of gynaecological cancer care
- Translational research

Key note lecture

The keynote lecture is being delivered by Professor Harald zur Hausen, 2008 Nobel Prize Laureate in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of 'human papilloma viruses causing cervical cancer'.

Exclusive programme for young researchers

An exclusive programme has been developed to support young oncologists in their careers, which focuses on the practical aspects of their role, research experiences and laboratory skills.

ESGO's position on cervical cancer vaccination

ESGO welcomes the excellent research which has led to the production of two HPV vaccines and the extremely encouraging data about vaccine efficacy. However, to date, no vaccine has been developed that protects against all oncogenic HPV types and therefore ESGO emphasises that cervical cancer screening programmes remain pivotal in the prevention of cervical cancer.

For further information please refer to the enclosed journal paper entitled 'ESGO statement on cervical cancer vaccination', August 2007.

Cervical Cancer Prevalence Statistics:¹

- There are nearly 500,000 new cases of cervical cancer worldwide every year
 - 60,000 of these are across Europe
- Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women between 15 and 44 years of age after breast cancer, and the third most common cause of cancer-related mortality in women, after breast and lung cancer
 - Nearly one third of cervical cancer diagnoses in Europe occur in women between the ages of 15 and 45 years
- Each year, an estimated 270,000 women die from cervical cancer worldwide
 - 30,000 of these deaths will be in Europe
- Cervical cancer is the number one cancer killer in developing countries
- Unless there is a dramatic improvement in prevention of cervical cancer and the incidence of the disease falls, by 2050, one million new cases of cervical cancer will be diagnosed each year

About HPV:²

- Infection with oncogenic HPV is the identified cause of cervical cancer
- HPV is a very common virus, which is easily transmitted through any sexual activity
- Approximately 100 types of HPV have now been classified, which can be divided into two main categories: oncogenic and low-risk
- Most HPV infections are transient and clear within one year, but persistent infection with oncogenic HPV types may lead to cervical cancer
- Other diseases caused by oncogenic HPV include less common cancers such as anal, penile, vulvar, vaginal, head and neck cancers
- Low risk mucosal HPV types can cause anogenital warts, or, more rarely, recurrent respiratory papillomatosis

References

1. HPV & Cervical Cancer Knowledge Centre. Available at: <http://www.epgonline.org/page.cfm/pageid/944>. Accessed: 29.09.09
2. HPV & Cervical Cancer Knowledge Centre. Available at: <http://www.epgonline.org/page.cfm/pageid/919>. Accessed: 29.09.09