

ESGO Leads Implementation of New Standard for Diversity in Gynaecologic Cancer Clinical Trials

BRUSSELS, Belgium – The European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO) will be the first scientific society to implement a code of conduct for diversity in gynaecological cancer trials at its upcoming annual congress.

From consensus to implementation

The GCIG Code of Conduct for Diversity in Gynecologic Cancer Trials¹ is the result of several years of international collaboration between all 33 Gynecologic Cancer InterGroup (GCIG) members, clinicians, researchers, patients and people with lived experience.

Alongside its active involvement in the development of the Code, ESGO will pioneer its implementation at the ESGO 2027 Congress in London, with the aim of translating its principles into visible and measurable practice.

This includes greater attention to international and geographical representation among speakers and chairs, meaningful involvement of patients and patient advocates, improved accessibility and participation, and systematic consideration of different perspectives in the scientific programme.

Authors and presenters will also be encouraged to apply the principles of diversity, representation, inclusion and generalisability when designing, analysing and presenting their scientific results. ESGO has embedded these principles into its abstract submission process, and initial findings will be shared at the dedicated equity, diversity and inclusion session at the Congress.

‘An international Code of Conduct must not remain a document,’ says Prof. Jalid Sehouli, ESGO President. ‘If we are serious about diversity and equity, we must also apply these principles to our own scientific structures. The ESGO Congress 2027 will be an important opportunity to demonstrate how a global standard can become practical reality.’

Diversity is a matter of scientific quality

Diversity in clinical research is often discussed primarily as an ethical or social responsibility. The new Code of Conduct makes another point equally clear: diversity is a prerequisite for high-quality science.

If certain populations are systematically underrepresented in clinical trials, the applicability and generalisability of the results may be limited. This can ultimately affect clinical decision-making and the quality of care.

¹ Sehouli J, Bookman MA, Harter P, et al.; Gynecologic Cancer InterGroup. Gynecologic Cancer InterGroup code of conduct for diversity in gynecological cancer trials: a clinical guide from the Berlin Gynecologic Cancer InterGroup meeting. *International Journal of Gynecological Cancer*. 2026;36(9):104830. doi:10.1016/j.ijgc.2026.104830.

The new Code addresses the entire research process – from study design and eligibility criteria to recruitment, informed consent, data collection, analysis, publication and responsibilities after a trial has ended.²

‘Diversity in clinical trials is not a matter of symbolism. It is a matter of scientific validity and patient care,’ says Sehouli. ‘We need to ask who participates in research, who remains underrepresented and what this means for the validity and applicability of our results. Medical progress must reflect the reality of the patients for whom we develop new treatments.’

The objective is not simply to ask who is included in a clinical trial, but also who has access to research, whose perspectives are considered and whether the evidence generated can genuinely inform care for diverse patient populations.

The Code of Conduct was formally adopted at the GCIG meeting in Berlin in 2026 and is officially supported by both ESGO and the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO).

About ESGO

The European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO) is a not-for-profit association established in 1983. ESGO’s aim is to improve the health and well-being of women with gynaecological cancers through advocacy, prevention, research, excellence in care and education. Since its formation, ESGO has developed a strong infrastructure of 3,000+ members and a network of early-career doctors, patient advocacy groups, centres of excellence and a variety of research groups across Europe and globally.

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² Sehouli J, Boer J, Brand AH, et al. *How to optimize and evaluate diversity in gynecologic cancer clinical trials: statements from the GCIG Barcelona Meeting*. International Journal of Gynecological Cancer. 2024;34(11):1677–1684. doi:10.1136/ijgc-2024-005982.