
Improving quality of cancer care in Europe



The European Parliament last week hosted a meeting to discuss ways of improving the quality of cancer care across Europe. The event was held as part of Quality Cancer Care Week 2018 (5th - 11th March) spearheaded by the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO).

The Brussels meeting, which gathered healthcare professionals, patients, policy-makers and other experts, took as its starting point the ECCO's "Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care". The discussion focused on:

- Core elements of quality cancer care, including patient access to a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals;
- Other patient perspectives on what constitutes quality cancer care;
- Tools to measure quality cancer care; and,
- European approaches toward achieving quality cancer care.

"All of us want to see the achievement of high-quality cancer care for all patients. However, to reach that goal, we need to know what quality cancer care exactly entails to, what its components are, and how to assess whether we have achieved our goals. That is where the ECCO Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care come in," according to ECCO President Professor Philip Poortmans.

The Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care (ERQCC) papers are organisational specifications, not clinical guidelines, and are intended to give oncology teams, patients, policy-makers, and hospital managers an overview of the elements needed in any healthcare system to provide high-quality care throughout the patient journey. References are made to clinical guidelines and other resources where appropriate, and the focus is on care in Europe.

The ERQCC papers "are statements of consensus between healthcare professionals and patients," said Prof. Poortmans, noting that ECCO is heavily engaged in the leadership task of turning that consensus into reality. He expressed his thanks to the many experts gathered in Brussels to jointly discuss and develop the roadmap to successful implementation of the ERQCC.

"One of the mantras that we have at ECCO is to value what matters most to patients. The ECCO Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care are applicable in any country, hospital or healthcare system within the EU. They are a result of discussion between healthcare professionals (HCPs) and patient advocates to ensure that good practice is available to all patients not just those in the richer countries," said Ian Banks, Chair of ECCO's Patient Advisory Committee (PAC). "Unlike guidelines, which can often be 'aspirational', essential requirements demand action from hospital administrators, HCPs and policy makers in every country."

Quality Cancer Care Week 2018 was organised by ECCO, together with European Cancer Leagues (ECL) in conjunction with the MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) group. ECCO and ECL extended their gratitude to Deirdre Clune MEP (EPP, IE) for hosting and chairing the meeting at the European Parliament.

Source: ECCO - European CanCer Organisation
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