2011 EORTC QOL Cancer symposium news release

A major international cancer conference is to be held at the European Parliament on 7–9 September 2011, to examine the importance of using a patient’s perception and experience when undergoing new and pioneering clinical trials, which can help develop novel treatments to help reduce the burden of, and perhaps cure, cancer.

The symposium entitled “Quality of Life, Symptom Research and Patient Reported Outcomes in cancer Clinical Trials” will run over three days, and will be chaired by Dr. Andrew Bottomley, Assistant Director of the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) and Head of the Quality of Life Department. Dr Bottomley is also Senior Editor of the well-respected journal Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research, published by the London-based publisher Expert Reviews Ltd.

Dr. Bottomley states that "This is a great opportunity to raise the profile of the patients’ experience and give this prominence in all future European and international cancer clinical trials. Now is the perfect time to ensure patients are proactively involved when designing trials that they will participate in and be aware of the possible benefits future treatments can have on reducing symptoms or improving quality of life."

The eminent EORTC Quality of Life Group has been involved in over 25 years of research developing new tools to assess QOL in clinical trials and many members will present and give their visions for the future at the symposium. Overall, this symposium brings together 28 world-leading Faculty, to speak about their expertise in different fields of cancer care and on implementing quality of life and symptom research into clinical trials. Importantly, European patient groups will be well represented and will provide a greater insight into future treatments by presenting their experience during the symposium.

Dr. Bottomley praises the support of Marisa Matias, Member of the European Parliament (who is a member of the United Left and Nordic Green Left Parliamentary Group): "Mariša has championed our case. We hope raising the profile of the patient’s voice will allow policy makers to consider these voices at the forefront and as being critical in cancer care and that funding for future work in quality of life and symptom research could hopefully become an important priority for the EU."
Marisa Matias, MEP and Session Chair at the symposium states: “It is important to involve cancer patients in the treatment and in the search for new treatments. A disease like cancer has many forms and stages, and we know very little about the treatment and its conditions, mainly in phase IV. To better know the causes of the disease, the best treatment and how treatment research can make the difference for their lives, we must involve the patients. In the same way, that involvement can give us a better understanding on the treatment efficiency and in which areas and stages there are less coverage and access to treatment. However, the voluntary possibility to participate in clinical trials is still a much closed reality. For us policy makers, it is crucial to take into consideration the patient’s experience.”

Speakers at the conference include Dr. David McNamee, Editor of The Lancet, who is expected to talk on the challenges of disseminating quality of life results in cancer clinical trials in medical journals, and Prof. Paul Kind from York University, who from an economic point of view, will debate the topical issue of the cost of cancer care and how different countries try to assess the use of drugs and costs relationships.

According to Dr. Hans-Henning Flechtner, a founding member of the EORTC QLG and an Associate Editor of Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research, who will co-chair a session on the relationship between genetics and quality of life, "The symposium offers an exciting platform to learn about the latest approaches to incorporating patient perspectives in cancer research that are being used in clinical trials groups in Europe, and North America. Such international exchanges happen only too rarely and provide a stellar opportunity for information exchange and learning."

If you are interested in knowing more information or attending, contact the EORTC Symposium Chair, Dr. Andrew Bottomley (andrew.bottomley@eortc.be)

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ABOUT European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC)
EORTC (http://www.eortc.be/) is one of the largest not profit cancer research organizations in Europe, with more than 2500 clinicians working together to find the best treatments for cancer patients. The EORTC Headquarters has been lead for over 20 years by Prof. Meunier, Director General of the EORTC.
ABOUT EXPERT REVIEW OF PHARMACEOECONOMICS AND OUTCOMES RESEARCH

Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research provides commentary and analysis on the relationship between economic factors and clinical prescribing decisions, providing a practical background to informed prescribing decisions and allocation of healthcare resources.

The journal covers:

- Reviews of pharmacoeconomic and quality-of-life literature
- Overviews of outcomes findings in specific therapeutic areas and disease states
- Decision-making tools
- Evidence-based medicine
- Quality-of-life assessment
- Trials methodology
- Formulary management
- Drug utilization review and evaluation
- Cost containment strategies
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