

“Learning from every patient” in cancer treatment

- ESTRO 2022
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LEARNING FROM EVERY PATIENT

The European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ESTRO) hosted their congress in Copenhagen in 2022 with more than 5,600 radiotherapy and oncology experts. The legacy objective was “Learning from every patient”, which played an essential role as an integrated tool in achieving the local organisers’ legacy vision:

- More cancer patients to receive a successful course of treatment with higher survival rates
- Fewer cancer patients experiencing the side effects and late effects due to radiation therapy
- More quality research in the field of radiation therapy

This vision linked directly to the priorities of Denmark’s cancer treatment with several clear patient targets. For example, the Danish national target for participation in clinical trials in the field of radiotherapy should be increased from 10% to 50% after the conference. The long-term

effects are still to be seen, but the **Danish Comprehensive Cancer Center Radiotherapy (DCCC-RT)** is committed to reporting back on the targets.

ESTRO 2022 was an extremely professional event managed by a very competent and experienced team in close collaboration with the community behind the conference and the local organising committee.

ENGAGING PEOPLE

Legacy activities have been an important priority for the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) and the congress since 2018. The legacy activities at ESTRO 2022 focused on improving the dialogue with patients, their relatives, and everyone affected or working with treatment within the field. The engagement activities suggested by the local organising group of Danish stakeholders were pivotal for choosing the Danish bid to organise the conference. The Danish bid for ESTRO 2022 comprised two parts: an engagement project and a functional bid. The engagement project was co-created



by **DCCC-RT, Wonderful Copenhagen,** and **Visit Aarhus.** The functional bid was prepared by Wonderful Copenhagen, **Bella Center Copenhagen,** and members of the **Meetingplace network.**

To facilitate the engagement activities, the conference had an open stage dedicated to cancer patients, their relatives, and the public with no registration required. The conference had a large exhibition area for private companies as well as a comprehensive website with live recordings of sessions for remote participants, making it possible to watch the 12 parallel sessions in the programme.

Anchoring the legacy targets in the local organising community ensured an ongoing improvement after the conference. In this way, the conference could act as an agent of change that will be an example to other countries. With the international perspective of the conference, it has a global impact.

The two local organisers, **Jesper Grau Eriksen** and **Cai Grau,** commented on the national impact:

“The conference was a good breeding ground for the exchange of ideas and new collaborations. It has been a particularly good experience to be able to present national data on Danish soil. We think it has sharpened the attention of the international participants on Danish results.”

“With regards to the Danish legacy project, it became more visible that radiation therapy is an important treatment option to cure cancer, and that there is an interest from the professionals in creating a dialogue with patients about the future of cancer treatment.”

LEGACY PROCESS



Strategic goals and societal needs

In 2012, ESTRO adopted a vision statement for 2020 with the intention to emphasise the activities of the scientific cancer society in developing and promoting the role of radiation oncology in multidisciplinary cancer care. This target has been debated by several dedicated groups of specialists and published as a new vision for radiotherapy and oncology for 2030, 'Radiation Oncology. Optimal Health for All, Together'. This sets the standards for research, education, best practices, treatment, exchange, etc., for all cancer patients worldwide.

The ESTRO 2022 vision of the Danish host community led by DCCC-RT was 'improving outcome and health by enabling and catalyzing large (national) networks across research, clinical services, treatment modalities, organ-specific groups, and patients'. Thus, well aligned with the ESTRO 2030 Vision 'Optimal Health for All, Together' and the subsequent common theme for the congress; 'Learning from every patient'.

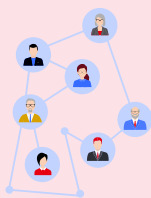


Objective

The conference vision adopted by the ESTRO organisation for ESTRO 2022: "Learning from every patient", played an essential role as an integrated tool in achieving the local organisers' legacy vision of succeeding in:

- more cancer patients to receive a successful course of treatment with higher survival rates
- fewer cancer patients experiencing the side effects and late effects due to radiation therapy
- more quality research in the field of radiation therapy

In addition, the Danish national target for participation in clinical trials in the field of radiotherapy is to be raised from 10% to 50% after the conference. A group of representatives from all the regions of the national organising group will follow up and report on the targets in the following years after the conference. Targets are aimed at being included in the national health quality indicators for treatment.



Stakeholder involvement

All sessions were carefully selected and curated by international expert committees organised by ESTRO, while Copenhagen Legacy Lab supported their work from a local perspective.



Activities

The target groups included researchers, treatment professionals, and students. For industry and suppliers, a large exhibition area was available. The open stage gave access to nonpaying participants representing patients, relatives and caregivers, the general public, and the press. Each day during the conference, the open stage provided two-hour presentations and a moderated English debate. Before and after the conference, the local organiser arranged an introduction and a final briefing from the conference in Danish.

The legacy activities focused on:

- Collaboration in Europe
- Oncopolicy (access, equity, and waiting times)
- Research/development collaboration
- Too few patients in clinical trials
- Radiotherapy in Denmark – is there really a gap?
- Patient involvement, value-based oncology, and public awareness
- Patient engagement from direct dialogue on a stage
- Ideas for innovation and improvement



Outputs (immediately after the activity)

ESTRO 2022 was an important event for European collaboration on research and the exchange of results among members of the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology. The high level of participation in the conference and contributions to the preparatory work indicate that the community is indeed "learning from every patient".

The Danish Comprehensive Cancer Center Radiotherapy steering group distributed the open-scene programme to Danish patients and their relatives. Between 25 and 100 people visited the patient engagement stage daily.



Outcomes (+6-12 months - changed behaviour)

The local organisers Jesper Grau Eriksen and Cai Grau commented:

"The conference provided a good boost to the development of radiation therapy - both the clinical component as well as the more experimental one. In addition, there were several developments in the treatment of hematological, breast, and esophagus cancers that will lead to a change in the individual clinics - if not already introduced."

The recruitment of more patients to clinical trials is one of the changes that will be given priority as a direct outcome of the conference. This will strengthen the research, the improvement, and benchmarking of treatment.

Introducing Danish stakeholders to the international society of ESTRO also had a significant effect. For example, the Danish cancer organisation "Kræftens Bekæmpelse" will participate in ESTRO 2023 in Vienna.



Impact (+1 year – societal value)

20 years ago, it was common for cancer patients in Denmark to seek advice at the Second Opinion Panel at the Danish Health Authority, who would also pay for expensive treatments abroad if relevant. This kind of treatment traffic is no longer common because treatment and results are well documented, and there is trust in the local health system.

There are still countries where cancer treatment is not at the optimal level, where doctors need better training, or where treatment is not updated. ESTRO works to minimise the gap between the actual and the best possible treatment. The ESTRO conference is where researchers exchange results, treatments are evaluated, and health systems are benchmarked.

The DCCC-RT community is committed to reporting back on the targets mentioned in step 2.



Potential legacy (+1-3 years and beyond)

The ESTRO vision statement from 2020 to 2030 shows a strong commitment to the positive development of cancer treatment, as summarised here below:

Vision statement 2020	Vision statement 2030	Evolution between vision statements
Every cancer patient	For all	Beyond patients, also caregivers and society
In Europe	For all together	Beyond Europe
Access	For all	Implies optimal access
State-of-the-art	Optimal	Based on the actual evidence and on specific possibilities and context
Radiation therapy	Radiation oncology	Beyond radiation treatment
Multidisciplinary approach	Radiation oncology together	With and beyond oncology, integrated patient-centric approach
Individualized for the patients' cancer	Optimal	The best that can be achieved for a specific patient, accounting for caregivers and society
Personal circumstances	Optimal	Personal, caregivers and social context considered