



BRACHYTHERAPY

Interview with chair of the 2021 GEC-ESTRO workshop

18 - 19 November 2021, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

This year sees the eighth edition of the annual workshop of the Groupe Européen de Curiethérapie-European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (GEC-ESTRO). How do you feel about this? Any challenges?

Initially, the eighth edition of the workshop was planned to be held in November 2020, but it had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected so many planned events. Talking about challenges, for quite some months it was not clear whether a live GEC-ESTRO workshop would be feasible at all this year. We still cannot be entirely sure, but recently the decision was made to proceed with planning the workshop as a live event as we had planned initially. This decision was possible through the commitment of the GEC-ESTRO committee and through support from the ESTRO office and our industry partners.

The workshop programme has been published recently on the ESTRO website and registration for the workshop is open (<https://www.estro.org/Workshops/GEC-ESTRO-workshop-2021>). We very much hope to see many registrations, preferably before 16 September, so that we know that we can count on the commitment of the broader GEC-ESTRO community. In case the unpredictable pandemic leads us to change plans, we will organise an online workshop with adapted workshop fees.

Do you see tangible outcomes from the annual workshop?

Of course, the GEC-ESTRO committee and the working groups have proceeded with their tasks during the last 18 months. We held many online meetings and had even more e-mail conversations. We proceeded with ongoing activities and began new ones. However, live contact is an important ingredient that enables our networks to prosper. It was so good to see many of you at ESTRO 2021 in Madrid. We all know that some situations just need a good face-to-face discussion in order to reach consent or to develop the best ideas. Our workshop has quite an interactive structure and supports people to find each other easily.

What is this year's theme and why did you choose it?

The theme is: What's next? Emerging opportunities.

Instead of presenting results of earlier and ongoing work, the focus of this year's workshop will be on new developments and their possible impact on brachytherapy. These developments include emerging technology and software tools for brachytherapy itself, and ideas regarding the combination of brachytherapy with other treatment modalities.

How is the programme for the workshop developed?

The programme is developed by the GEC-ESTRO committee and includes contributions from the different working groups. Part of the programme is plenary sessions and part parallel sessions. The working groups propose topics of interest that fit into the workshop theme and the respective speakers on those topics. The GEC-ESTRO chair and secretary, supported by the ESTRO office, merge the suggestions into a programme proposal, which is finally agreed by the committee members.

Is industry involved in the programme?

Collaboration with and support from our industry partners is important and very much valued. The workshop programme therefore contains a session that involves active industry participation through four individual industry presentations. Additionally, industry partners can discuss with customers and present products during the breaks. Without their repeated financial support, the workshop in its current form could not be realised.

Who is the workshop's target audience?

The target audience is the brachytherapy community in Europe and beyond. We are a multidisciplinary group that consists mainly of physicians, physicists, radiation therapists and technicians who work in the field of brachytherapy. But actually, everyone with passion for and interest in brachytherapy, or is just curious about it, is more than welcome!

How would you advise a first-time participant to make the most of the workshop in Rotterdam?

To make the most out of the first workshop, you should take the chance to get in contact with people who are active in your field of interest. Talk to the people that you have always wanted to talk to, ask questions and make suggestions. Decide whether you would consider active participation in a specific working group, introduce yourself and show your interest. Start building your own network. You will see that active participation is very welcome.

Any final remarks?

Keep your fingers crossed for a live workshop in Rotterdam and help us by registering early at <https://www.estro.org/Workshops/GEC-ESTRO-workshop-2021> !!

I look forward to meeting you in Rotterdam.



Ina Jürgenliemk-Schulz

Chair, GEC-ESTRO workshop 2021

