



BRACHYTHERAPY

World Congress of Brachytherapy 2021

6-8 May 2021, online

Due to Covid-19, the World Congress of Brachytherapy (WCB) 2021 was organised through use of a full digital platform that brought the international brachytherapy community together. WCB is traditionally organised by the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) or the American Brachytherapy Society (ABS) and is supported by several continental brachytherapy societies worldwide (the Australasian Brachytherapy Group (ABG); the Asociación Ibero Latinoamericana de Terapia Radiante Oncológica (ALATRO); the Canadian Brachytherapy Group (CBG); the Federation of Asian Organisations for Radiation Oncology (FARO); and the Indian Brachytherapy Society (IBS)). This year the congress was organised by ESTRO. The Groupe Européen de Curiethérapie (GEC)-ESTRO led the development of the scientific programme under the leadership of Dr Bradley Pieters (head of brachytherapy at the Academic Medical Center, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands).

Current and future topics of brachytherapy were addressed through a variety of teaching lectures, symposia, debates, proffered paper sessions and poster presentations. Many clinical and physical aspects of brachytherapy in the field were covered. The different sessions were well attended and, despite the digital format, lively and interesting discussions developed. This was especially true in the six debates and forum discussions. These sessions covered brachytherapy fractionation schedules for customised situations in prostate and breast cancer, brachytherapy contributions to combined treatments and developments towards a sustainable brachytherapy future. Some aspects were controversial, some less so.

Traditionally, during this congress, an outstanding colleague in the field of brachytherapy is honoured with brachytherapy's highest award, the Marie Curie Medal. This year our gold medal was given to Dr Alvaro Martinez (senior vice-president of scientific and clinical strategy at 21st Century Oncology, a division of Michigan Healthcare Professionals in Detroit, USA) for his outstanding scientific contribution, empathy, compassion and never-ending effort in the optimisation of radiation treatment and especially brachytherapy. His high-level award lecture was appreciated, as was the introduction by Dr Frank Vicini. Dr. Martinez emphasised that we must work together, today more than ever, to ensure that the true value of brachytherapy worldwide is conveyed, not only to the healthcare policy makers, but also to recruit the next generation of brachytherapists. To address these current challenges, the ABS has formed a special taskforce to address the impact of the radiation oncology alternative payment model (RO-APM) on both cervical- and prostate-cancer brachytherapy that will take effect in 2022. The ABS is also spearheading the 300-in-10 initiative that aims to educate more brachytherapists, with support from industry partners. To watch the Marie Curie Medal award session, please use this link in your browser: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/546422806>

The World Congress of Brachytherapy 2021 attracted more than 600 participants and included valuable contributions from our industry partners.



Ina M. Jürgenliemk-Schulz, MD, PhD
Chair, GEC-ESTRO



Firas Mourtada, PhD
ABS President

