



SCHOOL

Course Report

Multidisciplinary Management of Breast Cancer

16-19 April 2023, Naples, Italy

Course Director

- Philip Poortmans, *radiation oncologist, Iridium Network & University of Antwerp, Belgium*

Multidisciplinary ESTRO course on breast cancer: bridging the gap between scientific data and the clinical reality

I am a passionate radiation oncologist with a special interest in breast radiotherapy. I am a professor at the University Hospital (Universitair Ziekenhuis, UZ) Brussel in Brussels, Belgium, and a director of the radiotherapy institute named the Institut Andrée Dutreix, which is in Dunkirk, France. From 16-19 April 2023, I had the opportunity to attend the ESTRO course on multidisciplinary management of breast cancer, which took place in Naples.

The course was again a masterpiece. World-leading authorities in the field of breast cancer were present, including Philip Poortmans, Brigitte Offersen, Liesbeth Boersma, Orit Kaidar-Person, Marianne Aznar, David Dodwell, Sandra Hol, Thorsten Kuhn and Lynda Wyld. Up-to-date, cutting-edge scientific data were presented; these included the soon-to-be-published and long-awaited meta-analysis on regional nodal irradiation. Unlike at many conferences, the focus here was not on dry presentation of clinical trial results, but rather on exploration of their clinical implications. Furthermore, a patient-centred approach was chosen and participants could discuss individual cases, which led to lively interactions between participants and experts. Gaining multiple perspectives from different attendees is always beneficial, given their diverse backgrounds, schools and scientific justifications. Everything was meticulously planned and the organisation was impeccable.

It is sometimes difficult for clinicians to integrate the abundance of scientific data and guidelines into the everyday business of a clinic. Furthermore, scientific findings are sometimes contradictory or interpreted in different ways, and biases might blur our objectivity based on our own convictions or experiences. ESTRO does exceptional work to provide us with guidelines and directives; however, there is still a lot of room for discussion and debate. The course is an excellent place to engage in this discussion and it helps us to translate the scientific data and guidelines into real-life clinical work and to form more informed opinions to optimise breast-cancer treatment.

The only major drawback during the course was that football-crazy Naples saw its team lose to AC Milan in the champions league.

I sincerely would like to thank Professor Poortmans and colleagues for their outstanding efforts and commitment to making the ESTRO school on multidisciplinary management of breast cancer indispensable.



Prof Thomas Mulliez, MD PhD
UZ Brussel, Brussels, Belgium
Institut Andrée Dutreix, Dunkirk, France
thomasmulliez@hotmail.com

