



SCHOOL

Course Report

Multidisciplinary Management of Breast Cancer

10-13 October 2021, Brussels, Belgium

Course director:

Philip Poortmans, radiation oncologist, Iridium Netwerk and University of Antwerp (Belgium)

A radiation oncologist's perspective:

Could you please briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Monica-Emila Chirilă. I am a radiation oncologist based at the Amethyst Radiotherapy Centre in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. I am in the first year of practice after finishing my training as a resident.

Why did you choose to attend this course?

Breast cancer was the first cancer type that I treated and the main topic of my research projects. The progress in this field (in terms of both local and systemic treatments) is quite remarkable, so an update on the state-of-the art is required for all those who want to deliver the best treatment to their patients.

What aspects of the course were most interesting to you and why?

The contouring exercises and the feedback on them were extremely helpful. Interactive discussion of cases, particularly on the debatable aspects, was very engaging too.

Having the opportunity to discuss with such knowledgeable and experienced professionals and to hear their opinions was an additional advantage to the quality of the scientific information provided.

Did the course activities improve your knowledge and skills in the relevant subject?

The multidisciplinary format offered a well-balanced perspective because it offered an integrative approach, which broadened my views. It helped me to understand subtle aspects and to gain awareness of possible errors.

Did your course meet your expectations? If so, how?

This course exceeded my expectations because of its practical side and its educational quality. It was impressive how the faculty members involved themselves in helping us to improve our knowledge and skills. It was obvious that they were passionate about their work and that they wanted to help others grow professionally.

List three important takeaways following the course.

- **Ask your colleagues** – you will understand more of the process and be able to individualise the treatment correctly.
- **Be careful with “grey zone” cases** – follow the guidelines, but choose wisely when you need to use your own judgment.
- **Collect detailed information and improve your practice according to your findings** - enrol patients in clinical trials as much as possible.

How will what you have learned be implemented in your daily clinical practice?

The course confirmed the importance of evidence-based indications. Each detail of a case has a meaning and becomes a piece of the puzzle. It was helpful regarding the categorisation of the relative weights of these elements in the final decision.

I will make contours with an increased awareness of the elements that can influence them. Improved understanding of the surgical procedures will impact on the volume delineation, which will lead to better plans and to a decreased risk of toxicity.

I realise now the importance of the quality of multidisciplinary and multicentric collaborations, and of discipline and standardisation, at large scale. The perfectionism, the drive and the professional accomplishments of the faculty members, combined with their friendly, humble and open attitudes, were truly inspiring.

How would you encourage someone who has never been to a course run by the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) to join this course?

Even if you do not intend to become a specialist in breast cancer, the high incidence of this disease justifies an increased interest on it. So, if you want to give your patients high-quality treatment, you should try to learn from the best in the field, and the faculty members on this course are all in this top category - knowledgeable, experienced and open to sharing their knowledge. The course is well balanced in terms of theoretical and practical aspects and takes into account the importance of all stages of treatment.



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