



DID YOU KNOW?

“Our dedicated efforts for the 2011 Stockholm Congress have gathered together some of the best new cancer research studies from all over the world, resulting in an impressively high number of quality abstracts containing practice-changing studies of new and significant scientific importance.”

Michael Baumann,
ECCO President and
Congress Chair



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2011 European Multidisciplinary Cancer Congress: Spotlight on outstanding scientific programme

What a success! 15,931 participants from 116 different countries attended an outstanding 33-track programme containing the latest developments in cancer research, treatment and care, compiled by 262 Scientific Committee members. 285 programme sessions hosted over 2,000 presentations from 694 eminent experts containing their latest data, knowledge and experience. A record number of 34, late-breaking abstracts presented practice-changing data in four presidential sessions and 25 proffered paper sessions.

And 363 journalists attended the congress, which provided a unique platform for all professionals with a common interest in oncology to discuss, debate and deliberate new data.

Latest news: [Webcasts](#) are now available from the largest platform for practice-changing data in Europe. Visit our website for details on how to access the latest developments in oncology: www.ecco-org.eu.

Fabrice Andre outlines his top three highlights from the scientific programme

Johan Dikken, winner of the ECCO/EJC Young Investigators Award, shares his personal picks

Therese Sorlie found all the basics readily available

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Fabrice Andre outlines his top three highlights from the scientific programme

I enjoyed the Stockholm congress, as the scientific programme was in depth and covered multiple specialties. As a medical oncologist, I particularly appreciated the presidential sessions featuring late-breaking abstracts. These described the latest advances that will have an impact on daily clinical practice and provide some of the most important contributions for the development of knowledge and understanding in oncology. This is relevant to me, as I am focusing on breast cancer research, involving programmes devoted to new target identification and predictive biomarkers for treatment efficacy. I am also leading a randomised trial comparing standard chemotherapy to a genomic driven chemotherapy, and a clinical trial addressing the efficacy of high throughput technologies to drive patients into specific targeted agents.

A highlight for me was the revelation that everolimus showed efficacy in patients with ER+/Her2- breast cancer. Two randomised trials showed the efficacy of everolimus, an mTORC1 inhibitor in patients pretreated with aromatase inhibitors. One of the two trials was a registration trial that included more than 700 patients (BOLERO 2 trial). This trial reported a hazard ratio at 0.42 for PFS. The second trial was an update of a phase II randomised trial. This second trial is consistent with BOLERO 2 and, most interestingly, the authors reported biomarker data in a number of cases, and suggested that activation of mTOR pathway was predictive for the efficacy of everolimus.

Another area of interest to me is TDM1, an immunoconjugate binding trastuzumab and DM1, a cytotoxic agent. This drug has shown an improvement of PFS in comparison with trastuzumab.

An additional high point was the report of several trials testing high throughput technologies for daily practice. Three oral presentations have shown the feasibility of next generation sequencing, CGH array and gene expression arrays for treatment decisions. Such approaches could become a standard of care in a near future given their reproducibility and robustness.

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Johan Dikken, winner of the ECCO/EJC Young Investigators Award, shares his personal picks

My main focus is on treatment of oesophageal and gastric cancer, and I am also interested in cancer-auditing and nationwide registrations. I found the following areas to have most relevance for me:

- Presentation of the first results of the European colorectal cancer audit - EURECCA initiative by van den Broek et al. This study

showed large differences between countries regarding use of preoperative and postoperative chemo/radiotherapy across Europe. Hopefully this data will provide better ways to select patients for these therapies in the future;

- The session on oesophageal cancer outlining ways to improve outcome for patients was also significant for facilitating better patient management;
- I enjoyed the lecture by Dr Pahlman on Swedish Cancer registries showing that the introduction of registries for many different cancers in Sweden has greatly improved outcomes over the years. Setting up a registry aiming at complete coverage in a country can be very challenging but this lecture demonstrated that it is worth the effort - we can learn a lot from the Swedish model;
- The presentation of the MINDACT trial results (Rutgers et al.), as this trial has a unique design. Patients with breast cancer were risk stratified into low risk and high risk according to current guidelines and a 70-gene profile. When the guidelines and the gene profile showed conflicting results, patients were randomised for treatment with or without adjuvant chemotherapy according to either the guidelines, or the 70-gene profile;
- I also attended the FLIMS alumni workshop, intended for young researchers. The programme was highly educational and very useful for people at the beginning of their career.

In general, the congress programme provided a very broad spectrum of different topics covering all cancer subspecialties, offering something for everyone, irrespective of their field or interest. I also greatly appreciated the App provided by ECCO, as well as receiving the ECCO/EJC Young Investigators Award

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Therese Sorlie found all the basics readily available

There were numerous interesting topics to satisfy a multidisciplinary field at the congress. As a scientist, I believe it is important to know about basic science in oncology, to understand the biology behind tumour development and progression in order to treat cancer the optimal way, particularly in this era of personalised medicine. This point of view was reflected in many of the presentations.

I would like to share the three specific areas that I found particularly interesting and learned something about:

I learned about the importance of other aspects of tumour growth such as changes in metabolism and microenvironment and how increased knowledge of these aspects may contribute to more specialised cancer

therapeutics. This was emphasised in presentations by Tak Mak in the opening session on Saturday 24 September and M. Bissell and J. Pousyssegur in the scientific symposium on tumour microenvironment on Sunday 25th. It was also the focus of the debate on Sunday on whether or not epithelial-mesenchymal transition is essential for tumour progression.

I also discovered more about combination therapies, focusing on the benefit of combination of targeted treatment and broad targeting approaches, such as the addition of mTOR inhibitors to:

- Tamoxifen in metastatic breast cancer (Sirolimus), late-breaking abstract by GS Bhattacharyya and colleagues;
- Exemestane in advanced breast cancer (Everolimus), late-breaking abstract by J Baselga and colleagues; and
- PARP inhibitors in combination with cytotoxic treatments.

The development of resistance to various treatment regimes is also an emerging problem and this was discussed by T Helleday on 26 September on the problem of resistance developing in patients treated with PARP inhibitors, and by Fabrice Andre on the resistance to Trastuzumab and how to better select patients to receive mTOR inhibitors.

Another highlight involved tumour heterogeneity and the future of clinical trials. My take-home messages from this were:

- The importance of characterising genomic aberrations in tumours to be able to target treatment more appropriately;
- What we can learn from the whole genome sequencing efforts (M Stratton, keynote lecture 25 September);
- The need to conduct trials in subgroups of patients based on stratification by molecular subtypes, for example, and by other molecular factors, which was the topic of the lecture for the ECCO clinical research award (Presidential session 26th September).

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