

Report 7th EAPC Congress of the EAPC - Palermo, Italy, 1-5 April 2001

The aim of this Congress was to continue EAPC tradition with a challenging scientific programme that would inform and update on all aspects of palliative care. An exchange of information among professionals of any given field is the most productive and effective way to educate others and ourselves. Much care was taken to assemble renowned speakers to share their experience and knowledge with delegates from all over the world. The Congress was attended by 1,842 participants from 54 different countries. There were 110 speakers in total, representing many different countries and different professions including physicians, social workers, specialists in ethics, communication and pharmacology, nurses, social scientists, psychologists, volunteers and chaplains. Forty-three per cent of participants were physicians.

Four plenary sessions were held and they dealt with the following subjects: controversies in ethics, prognostication at the end of life, ethics within Latin Europe, controversies in therapeutics, end-of-life care decision-making, end-of-life care in children, towards European standards in palliative care (policy), palliative care in non-oncological patients, taking care of the difficult patient/the difficult family, nurses' challenges, controversies in hydration and nutrition, bereavement, loss and grief. Sixty parallel sessions were held and dealt with the following areas and topics: communication; public health policy and organisation; quality of life; research; family and education.

Delegate participation was high and the presentations and poster sessions were well received. Three prizes for the best posters were awarded.

Moreover, the Scientific Committee selected the best abstracts whose authors were given the opportunity to make an oral presentation within the corresponding sessions held by the invited speakers. Over 600 abstracts were submitted and 105 were selected for oral presentation.

The Congress has received Continuing Medical Education (CME) Accreditation from the Royal College of Physicians of London (20 CME credits), the European Society of Medical Oncology (18 ESMO-MORA points, category 1) and the Italian Ministry of Health (20 CME credits).

The Scientific Committee has received much positive feedback both during and after the Congress.

The importance attached to this event and the interest that it generated was evident from the patronage of the President of the Italian Republic and the opening addresses of the Italian Minister of Health, Professor Umberto Veronesi, the Archbishop of Palermo His Eminence Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi, Dr Marie de Hennezel of the University of Paris International Hospital, the Assessore alla Sanità Regione Sicilia Giuseppe Provenzano, the Presidente della Provincia Regionale di Palermo Francesco Musotto and the Commissario Straordinario of the City of Palermo, Guglielmo Serio.

The President of the Italian Republic has also addressed a greeting to the Congress and on the occasion of the opening ceremony His Eminence, Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi, read a greeting from the Pope, His Holiness John Paul II, to the audience.

We would like to thank all those who have worked hard in order to make this congress such a success: the EAPC Board, the EAPC Executive Committee, the organisers, the Scientific Committee, the Advisory Board, speakers and submitters of abstracts. And a special thanks to all the participants!

Sebastiano Mercadante, Chair of the Scientific Committee;
Giorgio Trizzino, Chair of the Organising Committee

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