



EUROPEAN
CANCER
PATIENT
COALITION

“Nothing about us without us!”

Call for Action

Biomarkers in the Era of Personalised Medicines

Francesco de Lorenzo, ECPC President

Who are we?

- **ECPC is the largest European cancer patients' umbrella organisation.**
- Representing more than 400 organisations in 46 EU and non-EU countries.
- **Our Vision**

ECPC works for a **Europe of equality**, where all European cancer patients have **timely** and **affordable access** to the **best treatment and care available**, throughout their life. ECPC believes that **cancer patients are the most important partners** in the fight against cancer and against all the cancer-related issues affecting our society. Policy makers, researchers, doctors and industry should recognise cancer patients as **co-creators** of their own health.

ECPC's commitments to improve cancer patients' treatment outcomes

ECPC-EAPM Biomarkers survey (2016) - conclusions

- Still largely unknown by patients
- **30% of the respondents are not familiar with the concept of biomarkers and 60% of respondents would not have been proposed a biomarker testing by their oncologist**
- Relationship between patient and oncologists can be improved as more time is required to inform patients about the challenges and benefits of biomarkers testing – **70% of respondents said that their doctor did not provide them with sufficient information**
- Poor patient knowledge surrounding diagnostic technologies and biomarkers, and lack of reimbursement for biomarker testing in many European countries creates an obstacle for improving cancer patients' clinical outcomes.

A Multinational Survey Comparison of Physicians and Patients by The Oncologist Journal (2016)

Awareness, Understanding, and Adoption of Precision Medicine to Deliver Personalised Treatment for Patients with Cancer

- 895 physicians and 811 patients interviewed.
- Most patients and physicians reported that patients understood that a tumor could be tested to determine most effective treatment (78% and 73% respectively) and that patients would be willing to participate in a personalized treatment plan.
- **23% of doctors felt that their patients were always fully informed.**
- Most physicians (90%) reported using biomarkers; among the 10% not performing the biomarker analysis, the most cited obstacles were local availability, speed of obtaining results, & cost.
- **Conclusions:** Wide global use of biomarker testing but with regional variations reflecting cultural and local practice. Self-reported and physician-assessed cancer literacy, although generally high, highlighted important regional variations and the need to provide patients with additional information.
- Based on an individual's specific profile, biomarkers can identify the people who may benefit from effective cancer treatment and avoid treatment related toxicity, also helping to ensure sustainability of the healthcare systems.

Biomarker testing challenges in Europe

Biomarkers are essential part of a targeted approach to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, based on an individuals specific profile.

- **Accessibility** of biomarker testing varies from country to country, but also within cities and regions. Biomarker diagnostics are often performed at larger hospitals only, access to which may add additional barriers to timely diagnosis.
 - **Administrative barriers** lead to delays and higher waiting periods for biomarker test results which vary from a few days to an entire month in some countries. There is no established organization between hospitals to perform test and share the results of these tests effectively.
 - **Reimbursement** of biomarker testing also varies by country. For example, the RAS Biomarker Testing is reimbursed at varying rates in 21 of the 28 EU Member States.
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- **Increase Biomarker Literacy:** Health authorities, physicians and patient groups need to improve awareness regarding genetic testing. Communication focused upon access to testing and how it can aid in patient care provides an important opportunity to engage patients in managing their health as active partners and inform them about break-through developments in medical technologies.
- **Improve access:** The development of biomarker-based diagnostics can facilitate faster diagnosis, a targeted personalised treatment plan, and help avoid waste of resources on ineffective treatments. Diagnostics tests need to be integrated in the clinical setting and be affordable and available to all patients.
- **Adapting the regulatory framework:** The regulatory and reimbursement processes must be adapted to the specificities of new technologies. Hospitals and other clinical settings have to adapt to respond to some of its challenges such as quality and assurance of the diagnosis or data privacy. A better integration of diagnostic regulations into therapeutic regulatory frameworks could improve the reimbursement and access of biomarker tests.

Thank you

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