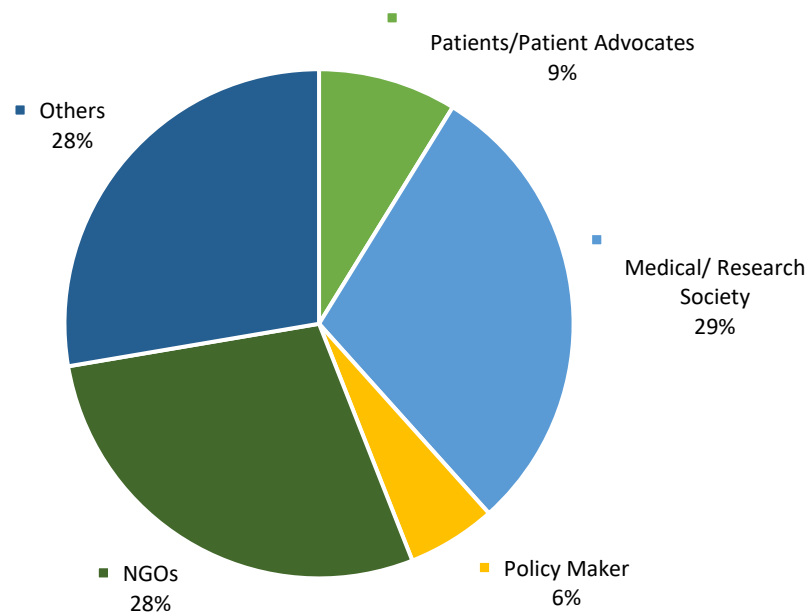


European Week Against Cancer

Events Report

During the European Week Against Cancer, and in the light of the EU Beating Cancer Plan, the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC), the Cancer Complications and Comorbidities Initiative Members and the European Parliamentary Intergroup “Challenge Cancer” co-organised five webinars, taking place from Tuesday 25th to Monday 31st of May 2021. These webinars presented various issues surrounding Cancer Complications and Comorbidities, to ensure that Cancer complications and comorbidities are addressed in the implementation of the Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan and increase awareness on the relevance of these comorbidities among relevant stakeholders and the public.

The events reached a broad and varied audience, composed of medical and research professionals, non-governmental organisations, general public, as well as patients, patient advocates, and policy makers, as shown in the following chart:



1) 25th of May 2021

On the 25th May took place the first webinar titled “*White Paper Launch: Tackling cancer-related complications and comorbidities*”, which treated about subject surrounding the impact on cancer-related complications and comorbidities on patient treatment, treatment efficacy, survivorship, and quality of life.

Ken Mastris, President of the European Cancer Patient Coalition ([ECPC](#)), moderated this session alongside **Antonella Cardone**, director of the European Cancer Patient Coalition ([ECPC](#)).



Antonella Cardone, director of the European Cancer Patient Coalition ([ECPC](#)), also presented the White Paper titled “*The impact of cancer-related comorbidities on patient treatment, treatment efficacy, survivorship, and quality of life*” with key messages to remember:



- The number of cancer patient reporting at least one comorbid condition is incredibly high, up to 90% compared to people without a history of cancer. Therefore, this issue cannot be neglected.
- Cancer-related complications and comorbidities need to be made a central part of all cancer care policies and need to be included in the Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan as an important pillar.

Cristian Buşoi, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Challenge Cancer Intergroup, talked about *Cancer complications and Comorbidities from policy-makers’ perspective*. MEP Buşoi’s important messages were:

- Cancer is indeed a very strong policy priority in the European Union, with the EU Beating Cancer Plan.
- The time is very appropriate, and the political wheel is here. We need to remain strong and firm and use this momentum to improve the situation of the cancer patients in Europe, and to invest in our fight against cancer.



Hans Wildiers, President of the International Society of Geriatric Oncology ([SIOG](#)) and Chairman of European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer ([EORTC](#)), talked about *Treatment decisions in older cancer patients with comorbidities*:



- Older patients are systematically excluded from trials, leading to a huge under-representation of patients 65+ years old.
- There is a need to include geriatric assessments in decision-making, as it detects a lot of problems which oncologists are not aware of, thus impacting treatment as well.

Christophe Bardin, Vice-president of the European Society of Oncology Pharmacy ([ESOP](#)), talked about *Reducing iatrogenic risk in cancer patients with comorbidities*:

- High polypharmacy due to comorbidities and age lead to drug interactions.
- We must highlight the complexity for oncologists to be expert in all drugs for all comorbidities. Hence, hospital pharmacists specialised in oncology may reduce iatrogenic risks.



Patrice Forget, Vice Chair of the Advocacy committee and member of The European Pain Federation ([EFIC](#)), talked about *Pain and impact on cancer patients' and survivors' quality of life*:



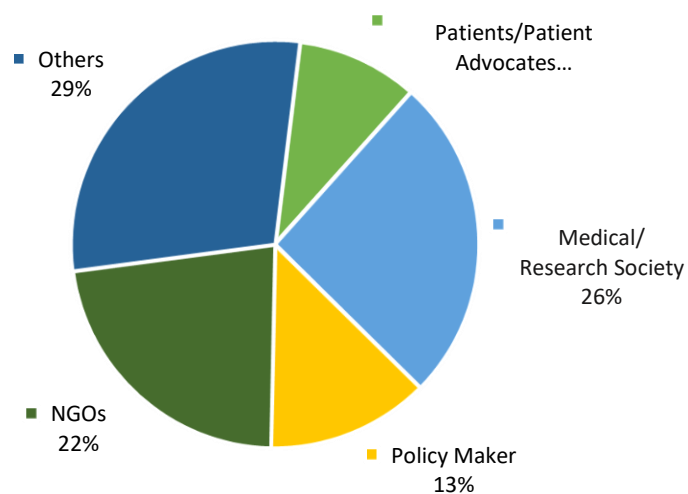
- We must take action, not only for high quality cancer treatment but also pain care.
- Best practices and research using pain as a quality indicator should be promoted, and standard for education and training on cancer pain are needed.

European Week Against Cancer



Webinar series on cancer complications and comorbidities

The audience of this first webinar was mainly composed of medical and research professionals, general public and non-governmental organisations, followed by policy makers, patients and patient-advocates.



2) 26th of May 2021

On the 26th of May, took place the second event titled “*Overcoming the burden of cancers caused by viral infections*”, which touched upon the prevention of cancer-causing virus infections, with a major focus on HPV and Hepatitis.

Peter Baker, member of the European Cancer Organisation ([E.C.O.](#)), moderated this second webinar.



Daniel Kelly, Co-Chair of the European Cancer Organisation’s HPV Action Network ([E.C.O.](#)), presented about *Viral Protection and Achieving the Possible on HPV cancer elimination*. His key messages were:



- All HPV-related disease is preventable through vaccination and screening. However, HPV vaccine misinformation is a critically important issue. We need a sustained multidimensional response to improve and maintain confidence in HPV and other vaccines.
- Australia expects to eliminate cervical cancer by 2035. Europe can match and exceed the goal by a commitment to eliminate all cancers caused by HPV. And key to this goal is gender-neutral vaccination.

Robert O’Connor, Director of Research at [the Irish Cancer Society](#), talked about *Achieving HPV cancer elimination in-country, with Ireland as a case study*.

His key messages were:

- Success in HPV elimination is about Communication: Getting communication right, getting people engaged and getting people to understand.
- There is need for continued investment in Communications, Alliances and Advocacy.



Maria Buti, European Association for the Study of the Liver ([EASL](#))’s EU Affaire Councillor and Viral Hepatitis Expert, talked about *Preventing Cancer by tackling hepatitis*:



- Majority of infected people are not diagnosed and thus majority of people are not treated either. Despite the WHO elimination program, we still have new infections, and we will not achieve the goal of elimination.
- It is important to start the conversation on Hepatitis, liver cancer screening and prevention.

Radan Kanev, Member of the European Parliament and member of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety ([ENVI](#)) committee, talked about *Hepatitis Elimination*:

- We need better monitoring of communicable diseases across the European Union, and how they are linked to chronic diseases, like cancer. If we manage to eliminate viral hepatitis, we will reduce the cancer burden by 2/3.
- We must use every opportunity to raise awareness and encourage people to take precautions.



Jacqueline Daly, Secretary of the board of the European Cancer Patient Coalition ([ECPC](#)), Director of Services East Galway & Midlands ([EGM](#)) cancer support, European Cancer Organisation HPV action network steering committee, the Gender inequality work stream, Let’s talk prostate cancer, Board member of Irish society of sexual Medicine, talked about *HPV Cancer Elimination from a patient’s perspective*. Jacqueline presented the touching story of *Laura Brennan*, an HPV patient who actively advocated for HPV Vaccinations. A letter



addressed to Jacqueline from Laura’s mother was read as a testimony of her fight against HPV:

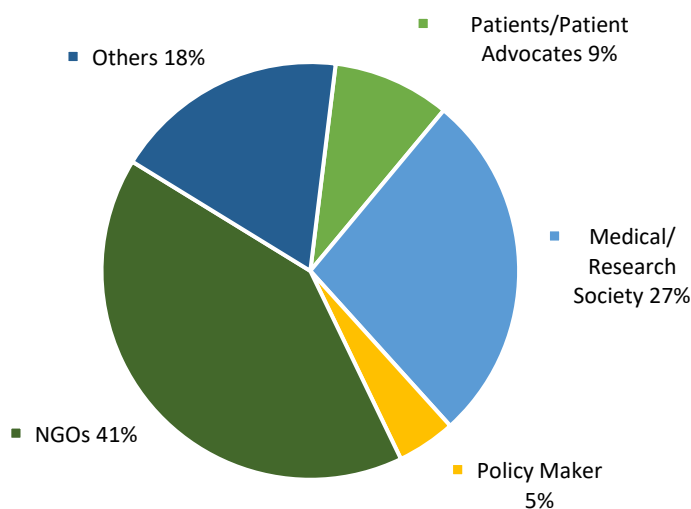
- “Laura was the reality of an unvaccinated child. And parents can now protect their sons and daughters from a similar fate. Laura’s power came from the fact that she was just an ordinary young girl facing death from a preventable illness, and that made her very hard to ignore. Her story is supporting parents to make the choice to protect the future of the next generation from HPV-related cancers.

Ivana Dragojevic, former hepatitis C patient and [European Liver Patients' Association](#) co-chair, co-chair of Associations Collaborating On Hepatitis To Immunize And Eliminate The Viruses In Europe ([ACHIEVE](#)), talked about *Liver cancer patients and their challenges*:

- We need to ensure that we prevent infection caused by viral Hepatitis, be it B and C. We need to make sure that those who are infected are diagnosed and given proper care and cure. We also need to monitor them for complications, including cancer.
- Hepatitis B and C are not well understood among people. There is a need to raise awareness and include more people in that process, ranging from teenagers, beauty parlours, or general practitioners, etc.



The audience for this webinar was composed of a majority of non-governmental organisation professionals, followed by medical and research society, general public, patients and patient advocates and finally policy makers.



3) 27th of May 2021

The 27th of May took place the third event “*How to care for your nutrition as a cancer patient?*”, which revolved around Cancer, Nutrition, and Nutritional Care.

This webinar was moderated by **Niamh Rice**, European Nutrition for Health Alliance ([ENHA](#)) Executive Director.



Aldo Patriciello Member of the European Parliament, Co-chair of the Challenge Cancer Intergroup and member of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer ([BECA](#)) of the European Parliament, talked about *Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan and the implementation of sustainable strategies*:



- Awareness of negative consequences of malnutrition in cancer patients is still very low among healthcare professionals, but also among patients.
- For this reason, I welcome this opportunity to raise awareness so that the European Union too can play its part in recognizing and providing tools to encourage the nutritional care of cancer patients.

Rocco Barazzoni Chairman of the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism ([ESPEN](#)), and Department of Medical, Surgical and Health Sciences University of Trieste, talked about *The cancer patient journey and the role of nutritional care*:

- Cancer patients undergo a very complex nutritional journey where malnutrition is a key challenge which limits their chances to access best treatment, reduces their quality of life and eventually survival.
- Awareness on the role of nutritional support needs to be enhanced also outside of the clinical nutrition community including networking and dissemination initiatives for best knowledge, guidance, and clinical practice.



Adele Hug, dietitian, and expert of the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians ([EFAD](#)) talked about *Primary and Secondary prevention*:



- We need to enhance the presence and abilities of a willing, well-educated, well-staffed workforce with an MDT support across the whole cancer care pathway.
- Alongside, public health policy needs to support change, enhance diet quality, and reduce inequalities.

Sergio Sandrucci, European Society of Surgical Oncology ([ESSO](#)) Education and Training Committee Chair Professor of Surgery Surgical Oncology Unit of San Giovanni Battista Hospital in Turin, talked about *The role of prehabilitation in surgical cancer patients*:

- Prehabilitation is quite a complex process, a mix of physical rehabilitation, nutrition, and psychological interventions. Yet, prehabilitation can improve the performing capacity of the patients.
- However, assessment and stratification of risk are necessary for decision-making, but also for planning interventions aimed at improving the functional and emotional status in anticipation of surgery.



Maurizio Muscaritoli, European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism ([ESPEN](#)) and Full Professor of Internal Medicine at the Sapienza University of Rome, talked about *HCPs training on nutrition-nutritional support in cancer care*:



- Most cancers impact on patients' nutritional status and body composition. However, awareness about the negative impact of malnutrition and cachexia in cancer is still limited.
- Nutritional issues should be considered from the moment a cancer is diagnosed.

Jonathan Clark, former Mantle Cell Lymphoma Patient shared his own journey and story about cancer and nutrition:

- Cancer treatment impacts your sense of taste and changes your taste buds. Everything tastes horrible, like mud and metal, and you lose your appetite. Your body feels empty, and life starts to feel empty too.
- Food and nutrition are so much more than just nutritional information and body, it is the mind! Food is a mood lifter and is linked to emotional well-being.
- Nutrition is good for the heart, good for the body, good for the soul!

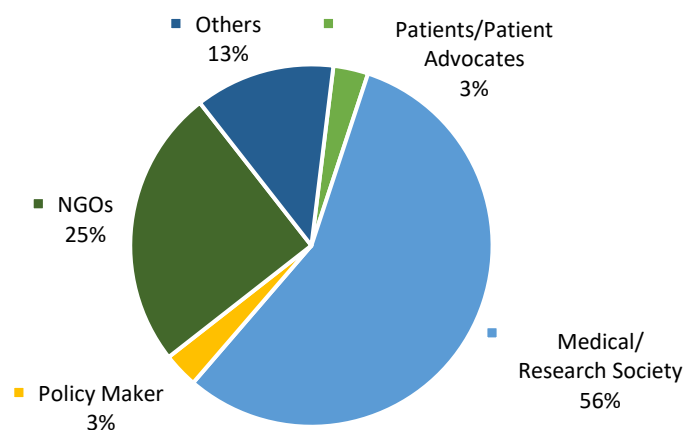


Menia Koukougiani, Caregiver and European Cancer Patient Coalition ([ECPC](#)) member based in Greece, also shared her story, this time from a caregiver's perspective:



- Most childhood cancer survivors experience excessive weight gain early in their treatment.
- Lifestyle interventions need to be initiated early, as soon as the cancer diagnosis is made, to prevent early onset of obesity and cardiovascular diseases. These interventions should be implemented and followed throughout the survivors' adulthood.
- We need improvement in educating and encouraging parents, caregivers, or young patients, to adopt healthier habits and lifestyle actions to prevent further morbidities.

Our audience in this webinar was composed of a majority of medical and research society, followed by non-governmental professionals, general public, policy makers, as well as patients and patient advocates.



4) 28th of May 2021

On the 28th of May took place the fourth webinar titled: “*Associated Thrombosis (CAT)/ Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) and Cardiovascular Complications and how they affect cancer patients’ survival and quality of life*”.

Charis Girvalaki, EU Affairs manager at the European Cancer Patient Coalition ([ECPC](#)) moderated this webinar.



Riccardo Asteggiano, European Society of Cardiology ([ESC](#)) member, Past-Chair of the Council of Cardio-Oncology, member of the Advocacy Committee, Committee for the Practice Guidelines and of the Digital Health Committee, talked *about Tip and Tricks in Cardiovascular care in cancer patients*:



- Oncologists and cardiologists should undertake together the therapeutic option for the best treatment to minimize cardiotoxicity without compromising anticancer efficacy, prevent cardiovascular side-effects, and detect early potential cardiovascular effects.
- We need appropriate strategies to involve patients as well as enhancing the knowledge of the physicians, by adding cardio-oncology in their core curricula.

Nicolas Gonzalez Casares, Member of the European Parliament and member of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer ([BECA](#)) of the European Parliament, talked about *CAT/VTE and Cardiovascular Complications from policy makers perspective*:

- Cardiovascular diseases are one of the most frequent side-effects of cancer treatment. Cardiotoxicity caused by cancer therapies is still a major limitation and can significantly reduce the clinical benefits of anti-cancer therapies, as well as cancer patient survival and quality of life.
- Cancer and cardiovascular comorbidities deserve more attention, if we are to reduce the significant burden they both represent.



Jennifer Lyn Baker, European Association for the Study of Obesity ([EASO](#)) member, talked about *The impact of obesity in cancer progression, treatment efficacy and toxicity, and recurrence:*



- Up to 40% of patients receive limited doses, not based on body weight, which of course impact the efficacy of treatments.
- There are far too many gaps in knowledge about treating patients with obesity and cancer, that must be addressed.

Barry Kevane, Consultant Haematologist at [Mater Misericordiae University Hospital Dublin](#), talked about *Cancer-associated thrombosis: Current challenges and future perspectives:*

- Reaching a timely diagnosis and timely initiation of anti-coagulants therapy can help to avoid a potentially fatal outcome.
- It is vital that we continue to raise awareness of thrombosis risk and ensure that all patients and their healthcare providers are aware of the need to be vigilant against the signs and symptoms of VTE.



Anna Falanga, The European Thrombosis and Haemostasis Alliance ([ETHA](#)) member, Director of the Department of Immunohematology and Transfusion Medicine and Director of the Hemostasis and Thrombosis Center talked about *The effectiveness and safety of thromboprophylaxis in cancer patients:*



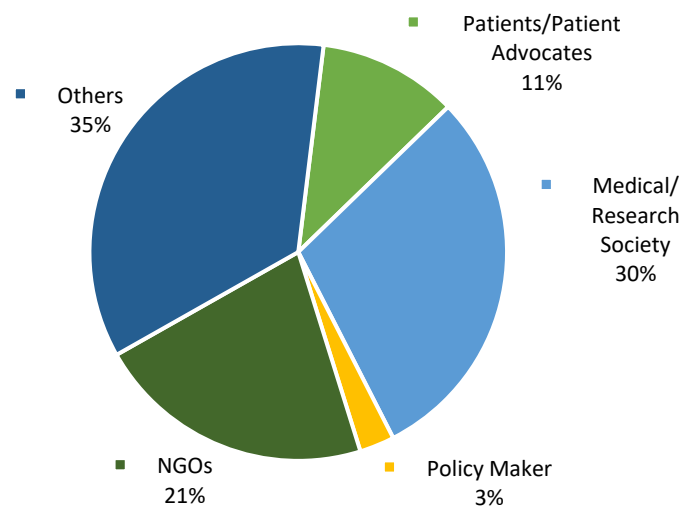
- RAMs are under-used by clinicians and must be implemented more widely for the appropriate management of cancer-associated thrombotic complications.
- The predictive role of thrombotic biomarkers not only for VTE, but also for cancer survival is an important research challenge.

Joanne Campbell CAT patient, [Thrombosis Ireland](#), shared her perspective as a patient:

- Thrombosis needs recognition as an extremely important comorbidity of cancer. Patients need to be informed of the risks, the signs to watch out for and the importance of getting medical attention fast.
- Medical staff need to be educated better about thrombosis, and there needs to be investment in thrombosis research so patients can be informed, protected, treated, and helped to recover in the most professional, correct and empathetic way possible.



Our audience in this webinar was composed of general public, medical and research society, non-governmental organisations, as well as patients, patient advocates and policy makers.



5) 31st May 2021

On the 31st of May took place the fourth webinar titled: “*The crucial steps to combat cancer.*”, touching upon subject of Cancer prevention, screening, and early detection.

This webinar was moderated by **Hendrik Van Poppel**, Adjunct Secretary General of the European Association of Urology ([EAU](#)) and Executive Member of Education Leuven, alongside **Antonella Cardone**, Director of the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC).



Due to unforeseen circumstances, **Cristian Buşoi**, Member of the European Parliament and Challenge Cancer Intergroup Chair, could not attend the webinar.

Wendy Yared, Director of the Association of European Cancer Leagues ([ECL](#)), talked about *Implementation of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan and seizing the momentum*:



- We see that the momentum is stronger than ever now, due to the collaborative advocacy work from civil society groups as well as parliamentary group. We have different partners coming in, creating a strong momentum and we really need to take advantage of it.
- We recommend updating the Council Recommendation on Cancer screening from 2003, it is more than about time!

Hendrik Van Poppel, Adjunct Secretary General of the European Association of Urology ([EAU](#)) and Executive Member of Education Leuven, talked about *Cost-effectiveness of cancer early detection for certain cancer types in older ages*:

- It is important to use PSA testing to combat prostate cancer, the second most killing cancer in men.
- However, it is important to use PSA testing properly. Not how we did it in the past, but by risk stratifying early detection.



Cornel Radu Loghin, Secretary General of the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention ([ENSP](#)), talked about *Ending tobacco use for beating cancer*:



- There is still place for more research and scientific work on tobacco and cancer topics.
- As NGOs, we can bring our contribution to tobacco control on the global level.

Nick Sheron, Policy and Public Health Committee Member of the European Association for the Study of the Liver ([EASL](#)), talked about *The cancer risk associated with alcohol - how many cigarettes are there in a bottle of wine?*:

- Alcohol related cancers and mortality are a serious and significant issue.
- Alcohol is exempt from EU law on labelling of food and drink; therefore, consumers will only be told the truth about alcohol and cancer if EU law is changed. Consumers have the right to know that alcohol causes cancer and it should be said so in every alcohol label.

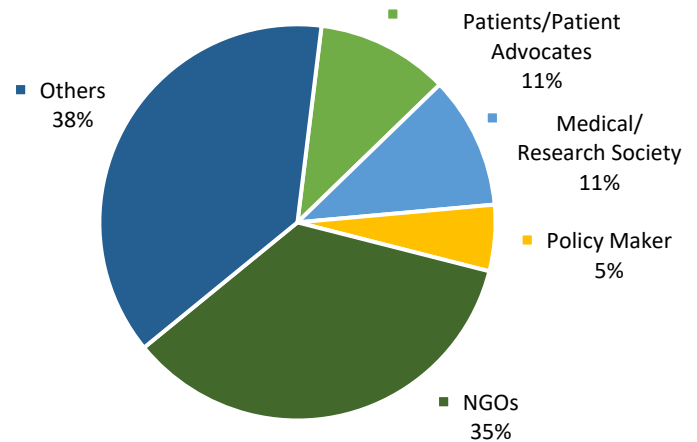


Ana Abreu, European Society of Cardiology ([ESC](#)) Chair, European Association for Palliative Care ([EAPC](#)) Cardiac Rehabilitation Section and Education and Membership Committee Coordinator of CR Program and Stress Testing Section of Cardiology Department of the Hospital Santa Marta in Lisbon, talked about *Sedentarism and Cancer*:



- Physical activity reduces the risks of cancer mortality and overall mortality. Exercise prevents and treats a lot of problems in different organs.
- The American heart association and the European Cardiology Society recommend for patients with cancer to be managed inside programs of cardio-oncology rehabilitation with exercise training programs.

Our audience in this webinar was composed of many people from a general background, followed by non-governmental organisations, patients and patients advocates, medical and research society, as well as policy makers.



During this week's event we could notice a widespread interest in the cancer related complications and comorbidities across various groups. The organisation of the webinars was successful thank to the work and collaboration of the various organisations and experts, whose input and participation brought great insight into the cancer related complications and comorbidities subjects. During this week, we have highlighted the importance of the past work that has contributed to bring these subjects to light until now, and the importance of continuing the to take actions towards a better recognition of the various cancer-related complications and comorbidities.