ECCO: Improving outcomes for all cancer patients in Europe through multidisciplinarity

The European CanCer Organisation (ECCO) is a not-for-profit federation that exists to uphold the right of all European cancer patients to the best possible treatment and care, promoting interaction between all organisations involved in cancer at European level. ECCO aims to raise awareness and improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care of cancer patients. CEO of ECCO Birgit Beger spoke with us at Research Outreach to discuss their work and more in greater detail.

According to the World Health Organisation, cancer causes 20% of deaths in the European Region. With more than 3 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths each year, cancer is the most important cause of death and morbidity in Europe after cardiovascular diseases. But what about the lucky survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover? How can we ensure that patients have access to the best possible treatment and care? How can care for cancer patients be improved across Europe? These are the many questions and key focuses for the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO).

ECCO connects the European cancer community by leveraging knowledge, expertise, and cultures like those of surgeons, radiologists, medical oncologists, pathologists, pharmacists, researchers, nurses, psychologists etc. ECCO is a patient-centric organisation that involves a close and early collaboration with 15 European associations, ECCO needs to bridge together different professional traditions and cultures like those of surgeons, radiologists, medical oncologists, pathologists, pharmacists, researchers, nurses, psychologists etc. ECCO is a patient-centric organisation that involves a close and early collaboration with 15 European associations.

ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.

ECCO is a founding member of the Alliance of Biomedical Research Institutes (ABRI) and a long-standing partner of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). ACCO also has a longstanding partner of the Joint Research Centre, which provides the European Union with scientific knowledge when formulating policies and legislation.

Lastly, ECCO also invests its own focus on cancer research, by providing feedback to the European Commission to its consultation on the Advisory group report for the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge on health, demographic change and wellbeing.

From a more personal perspective, are there any achievements you are particularly proud of? ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.

ECCO’s vision is to improve outcomes for all cancer patients in Europe through multidisciplinarity

ECCO’s vision is to improve outcomes for all cancer patients in Europe through multidisciplinarity.

ECCO’s vision is to improve outcomes for all cancer patients in Europe through multidisciplinarity. There is no golden standard: recommendations can lead the way to improve each health care system and cultures like those of surgeons, radiologists, medical oncologists, pathologists, pharmacists, researchers, nurses, psychologists etc. ECCO is a patient-centric organisation.

Thirdly, ECCO is a longstanding partner of the Joint Research Centre, which provides the European Union with scientific knowledge when formulating policies and legislation. Lastly, ECCO also invests its own focus on cancer research, by providing feedback to the European Commission to its consultation on the Advisory group report for the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge on health, demographic change and wellbeing.

From a more personal perspective, are there any achievements you are particularly proud of? ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.

ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.

ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.

ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.

ECCO looks back to a heritage of extensive engagement of its members and a series of 18 very successful congresses bringing science and research forward and being a cornerstone in scientific progress by representing interdisciplinary latest clinical trial data. Devising a strategic renewal in 2013/2014, ECCO has organised scientific congresses for its members. For example, ECCO organised a joint symposium for the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) which brings together large numbers of active cancer survivors and the care and treatment they need to recover.
do events like these have on installing a community movement in cancer research?

With ECCO’s strategic renewal, the format of our congresses was redesigned. The ECCO 2017 Congress in Amsterdam in January 2017 showed the many innovative concepts in bringing research, science and policy closer together.

The ECCO 2018 European Cancer Summit takes place in Vienna, Austria on 7–9th September 2018. It aims at taking the congress to a higher level, namely to a summit where worldwide leaders from the cancer healthcare, patient advocacy and stakeholder communities come together in a unique multidisciplinary forum. The idea is to complete the summit with the agreement of consensus resolutions by leaders in cancer policy, which will shape oncopolcy in health care systems across Europe.

To connect science with real life, outcome research forms a decisive part, i.e., using real-world data to observe how new treatments and diagnostic modalities have performed in cancer care delivery. Health economics of cancer care is another topic, which is highly connected with outcome research and cannot be surpassed in any oncology debate today. Lastly, ECCO aims to focus on the patient voice to determine an agreed vision for guiding and supporting patients through diagnosis, treatment and follow-up in a world facing an ageing population, increasing survivorship and a technological revolution in e-health resources.

Do you think cancer research receives as much funding and attention as it should?

From a European perspective, the European Commission sees cancer a priority list of the current Commission. However, we are delighted that a new EU ‘Joint Action’, following CanCon and aiming to implement the CanCon European Guide on Quality Improvement in Comprehensive Cancer Control, is a product of co-operation between ECCO, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) and the European Organisation for Research (MCCR) Workshop, which is an educational programme that introduces junior clinical oncologists in any oncology subspecialty to the principles of good clinical trial design. The workshop is the prototype of co-operation between ECCO, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) and the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO). The junior clinical oncologists not only come from all specialties, but also from all over the world, which makes the workshop an international and inspiring event.

Beyond this, ECCO also strives to cooperate more on a policy level. For example, the question of protocols for clinical trials, clinical trial data and ethical questions are of international relevance and therefore, a joint approach is highly desirable.

ECCO is also involved as a contributing member of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and aims at being an active partner internationally wherever there is common ground for the development of policy, for example via the World Cancer Declaration.

Which direction would you like to see cancer research going in the future and how will ECCO’s leadership strategy play into this?

Given the dimensions addressed above, the growing importance of cancer research, and the global co-operation needs, ECCO’s role of fostering multidisciplinarity throughout the European region, but not stopping at this, is the right way forward.

One large task is to deal correctly with data. The means of our age, electronic data. The means of our age, electronic tools and systems seem to offer endless opportunities if the society manages to harness them in an ethical and legally correct manner.

One of the challenges that remains today is the integration of data generated in one component of healthcare delivery into the wider healthcare IT system, so that in terms of providing good patient care, a more seamless record can be shared across all three fields of primary, secondary and social care. For cancer research, the need to collect data as well as to share results from clinical trials, independent of whether they are positive, negative or inclusive, is decisive. Despite the establishment of Cancer Registries and European Reference Networks, there are still many steps ahead before the challenge of data is managed appropriately in cancer research.

For more information about ECCO, their upcoming events or the European Journal of Cancer, please visit ECCO’s website at www.ecco.org.eu.

Our research greatly reflects the debate on quality cancer care: what are the elements required to deliver high quality cancer care for all patients in Europe?

Research and cancer control still as an important topic, though health policy overall does not seem to be high on the will start in 2018. The EU’s research programme, Horizon 2020, has also set aside substantive resources for cancer research advances, the more it becomes apparent how many gaps there are still to close before science is anywhere near mastering cancer. Though there is the firm belief among researchers that cancer will be curable, there needs to be more research into the varieties of cancer. The perception and understanding of cancer has become much more differentiated and will have to become even more so to help advance with therapies delivering best health outcomes.

Although your name has a European focus in its title, do you extend your research outreach to collaborate with other countries internationally?

ECCO has longstanding relationships with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and with the Japan Society of Clinical Oncology (JSCO) including via joint sessions at each other’s congresses.

Established in 1999, ECCO has been co-organising the Methods in Clinical Cancer Research (MCCR) Workshop, which is an educational programme that introduces junior clinical oncologists in any oncology subspecialty to the principles of good clinical trial design. The workshop is the prototype of co-operation between ECCO, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) and the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO). The junior clinical oncologists not only come from all specialties, but also from all over the world, which makes the workshop an international and inspiring event.

Beyond this, ECCO also strives to cooperate more on a policy level. For example, the question of protocols for clinical trials, clinical trial data and ethical questions are of international relevance and therefore, a joint approach is highly desirable.

ECCO is also involved as a contributing member of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and aims at being an active partner internationally wherever there is common ground for the development of policy, for example via the World Cancer Declaration.

Which direction would you like to see cancer research going in the future and how will ECCO’s leadership strategy play into this?

Given the dimensions addressed above, the growing importance of cancer research, and the global co-operation needs, ECCO’s role of fostering multidisciplinarity throughout the European region, but not stopping at this, is the right way forward.

One large task is to deal correctly with data. The means of our age, electronic tools and systems seem to offer endless opportunities if the society manages to harness them in an ethical and legally correct manner.

One of the challenges that remains today is the integration of data generated in one component of healthcare delivery into the wider healthcare IT system, so that in terms of providing good patient care, a more seamless record can be shared across all three fields of primary, secondary and social care. For cancer research, the need to collect data as well as to share results from clinical trials, independent of whether they are positive, negative or inclusive, is decisive. Despite the establishment of Cancer Registries and European Reference Networks, there are still many steps ahead before the challenge of data is managed appropriately in cancer research.

For more information about ECCO, their upcoming events or the European Journal of Cancer, please visit ECCO’s website at www.ecco.org.eu.

Our research greatly reflects the debate on quality cancer care: what are the elements required to deliver high quality cancer care for all patients in Europe?

Research and cancer control still as an important topic, though health policy overall does not seem to be high on the will start in 2018. The EU’s research programme, Horizon 2020, has also set aside substantive resources for cancer research advances, the more it becomes apparent how many gaps there are still to close before science is anywhere near mastering cancer. Though there is the firm belief among researchers that cancer will be curable, there needs to be more research into the varieties of cancer. The perception and understanding of cancer has become much more differentiated and will have to become even more so to help advance with therapies delivering best health outcomes.

Although your name has a European focus in its title, do you extend your research outreach to collaborate with other countries internationally?

ECCO has longstanding relationships with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and with the Japan Society of Clinical Oncology (JSCO) including via joint sessions at each other’s congresses.

Established in 1999, ECCO has been co-organising the Methods in Clinical Cancer Research (MCCR) Workshop, which is an educational programme that introduces junior clinical oncologists in any oncology subspecialty to the principles of good clinical trial design. The workshop is the prototype of co-operation between ECCO, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) and the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO). The junior clinical oncologists not only come from all specialties, but also from all over the world, which makes the workshop an international and inspiring event.

Beyond this, ECCO also strives to cooperate more on a policy level. For example, the question of protocols for clinical trials, clinical trial data and ethical questions are of international relevance and therefore, a joint approach is highly desirable.

ECCO is also involved as a contributing member of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and aims at being an active partner internationally wherever there is common ground for the development of policy, for example via the World Cancer Declaration.

Which direction would you like to see cancer research going in the future and how will ECCO’s leadership strategy play into this?

Given the dimensions addressed above, the growing importance of cancer research, and the global co-operation needs, ECCO’s role of fostering multidisciplinarity throughout the European region, but not stopping at this, is the right way forward.

One large task is to deal correctly with data. The means of our age, electronic tools and systems seem to offer endless opportunities if the society manages to harness them in an ethical and legally correct manner.

One of the challenges that remains today is the integration of data generated in one component of healthcare delivery into the wider healthcare IT system, so that in terms of providing good patient care, a more seamless record can be shared across all three fields of primary, secondary and social care. For cancer research, the need to collect data as well as to share results from clinical trials, independent of whether they are positive, negative or inclusive, is decisive. Despite the establishment of Cancer Registries and European Reference Networks, there are still many steps ahead before the challenge of data is managed appropriately in cancer research.

For more information about ECCO, their upcoming events or the European Journal of Cancer, please visit ECCO’s website at www.ecco.org.eu.