



Women 4 Oncology Forum

**A network to
share and to grow**

Martine Piccart, BE



“This initiative intends to explore and analyse the world of female oncologists in order to devise activities and projects aimed at ensuring respect and equality in a context where the ‘female work force’ is steadily increasing”

Cora Sternberg, IT



“I've never been part of a group like this in my life. Women should help each other, we should support each other, we should have a think tank of all the different things we can do.”

“It may not be lobbying all the men who are in the parliament at the moment; it might not be the first step. It may be publishing a book to create more awareness of what is actually going on; it may be making us more aware of what we are doing; making the young women aware that they are becoming important.”

Susana Banerjee, UK



“The most important issue is that women oncologists support each other; without that support, it can be incredibly difficult.”

“One challenge of being a woman in oncology is to remain confident in one’s own female sensitivity. That’s what I learnt along the way: to acknowledge colleagues’ perception of individuals, but also to embrace who I am, and not to change in order to become more like the male stereotype.”

Cristiana Sessa, CH



“Women need to be given the opportunity to express themselves, the freedom and opportunity to be proactive, innovative. They need to feel that people trust them to work well in a team.”

“Achieving managerial skills is undoubtedly important if you want to be successful and can also provide the basic skills needed to help others to work better, thus helping everyone. I have been helped considerably on the ESMO Executive Board: it gives you the feeling of family.”

Pilar Garrido, ES



“You need to love your job, because it requires hard work. In professional and personal life you need to understand your priorities and decide which are the most important.”

“The way we have to change and improve things is through good networking. It's a key element. We can help each other; when we learn how to work as a team, we can take advantages in working together.”

Marina Garassino, IT



“Women have unquestionable unique characteristics: problem solving skills, ability to listen, long-term vision and, above all, a clear sense of empathy.”

“However, we must be more self-assertive, determined and believe in ourselves, without abusing our ‘power’. These characteristics, together with our willingness to network and team work could be key to make changes happen. It is true that strength is through unity.”

Enriqueta Felip, ES



“The challenge for women professionals is maternity: this is the most important challenge that we have.”

“Women are perceived as team workers and men more as leaders. I don't know if this difference is true or only a perception but this perception is contributing to keep the men in better positions.”

Elisabeth De Vries, NL



“We have quite a unique profession, where year after year we have new developments very interesting for patients. The risk of the profession is that it is so overwhelming.”

“I had the feeling in Europe we were reluctant to say that it is important to look for balance; to check whether we give women the right opportunities. We still have things to do, good for females and males as well. The fact that we can speak about it openly is already very good.”

Monica Arnedos, FR



“As a woman, you are expected to do more things than just work.”

“The fact that we see fewer women in leadership roles is a cultural thing. Whether breaking this pattern must be done through cultural change or if societies like ESMO can play a role is an interesting issue.”

Gabriela Kornek, AT



“Younger generations have more difficulties than I had, because we have now as many female medical oncologists as male ones, and they have to work harder.”

“I think it is particularly difficult to have both a career and family in the field of medical oncology: we've had so many developments in the last years that there is a lot of pressure to keep up to date.”

Elske van der Wall, NL



“When we are addressing women at an age when they already feel that too much is overwhelming them, we lose them.”

“The best way in research, in care, wherever, is the combination of men with women and it should be more equal than it is now at higher levels, because you get the best results when you have them combined.”

Erika Martinelli, IT



“You need to have the patience to listen to the patient and to understand. Being a mother has helped.”

“Women still have to prove they are capable. They still have to try harder to be appreciated. As a higher number of women enter the field, a higher number of women will occupy key positions.”

Solange Peters, CH



“To gain representation of females we need an intermediary period in which we have designated positions for them.”

“I’m quite convinced that this is the only way to move; unfortunately, we’ve already tried in different ways but it didn’t work.”

Nadia Harbeck, DE



“If you look at young women trying to get to high positions, they lack confidence because they lack role models.”

“It would be important to also have some male colleagues onboard to say why they promote women, what they consider as positive in the interaction between female and male leaders in oncology.”