

Evidence and Research in Rectal Cancer

Rome, Italy
27 - 29th April 2008

Course Director:... **Professor V. Valentini**

This multidisciplinary teaching course provided an excellent opportunity for practitioners from around the world to learn about new treatments for rectal cancer and was the second annual course organised by Prof. Valentini in the Italian capital.

As a clinical oncologist responsible for prescribing and delivering chemotherapy and radiotherapy for patients with rectal cancer, I was particularly keen to hear about new ways of improving the management of the different stages of the disease and developments in the methods available for localising rectal adenocarcinoma.

The venue was Policlinico Universario a Gemelli, located in a suburb of Rome with frequent bus and train links to the city centre. There are several hotels within walking distance of the hospital and accommodation was also available within the hospital grounds, making it easier to attend the morning lectures.

The course started on Sunday evening when Prof. Valentini welcomed some 87 participants from 23 countries and delivered the introduction to the programme.

We enjoyed an interesting lecture on critical reading of the literature by J.M Borrás and following this we were divided into four working groups. In each group, clinicians and two teachers had the opportunity to discuss recent randomised clinical trials that have shaped the treatment of rectal cancer. Later in the course, we had the opportunity for working group discussion of the management of early, intermediate and advanced cases of rectal cancer.

There were a series of interesting and informative lectures throughout this course.

R. Beets-Tan spoke about the advances and limitations of different modes of imaging of rectal cancer including MRI imaging with contrasts USPIO and MS 325 for lymph node involvement.

Surgical aspects were well covered by I. Pahlman, C. Van de Velde and Z. Krivokapic who gave lectures on the history of TME, technical aspects of TME, complications from surgery, future developments, mode of failure and follow up.

The pathologist's point of view was presented by N. Scott who highlighted the importance of complete TME and the results of CRO-7.

The rationale behind short courses of radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment was covered well by C. Marijnen whilst C. Rodel spoke about multimodality treatment from the point of view of a long course of therapy.

H. J. Schmolle gave an excellent review of active chemotherapy agents and regimens in the management of rectal cancer.

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