

Conference Report

The 3rd InterAmerican Breast Cancer Conference Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach Hotel, Cancun, Mexico July 27–29, 2006

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The 3rd InterAmerican Breast Cancer Conference took place in Cancun, Mexico in the Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach Hotel from July 27–29, 2006.

The meeting followed on from successful meetings which were held in 2002 and 2004. Over those years, the participation increased from 200 to over 450 active participants at the 2006 meeting. Delegates from 36 countries from the Americas, Europe and Asia participated. Not only oncologists (surgical, radiation and medical), but also nurses and support staff were present and enjoyed the wonderful environment and the high level of scientific and clinical meetings.

The first day, Thursday July 27, the morning session was chaired by Dr. Hortobagyi from MD Anderson Cancer Center and Dr. Stefan Glück, University of Miami, Sylvester Cancer Center, Dr. Judy Garber presented on epidemiology of breast cancer as well as assessment of women who are on high risk of getting this dreadful disease. Modifying risk factors and management was also identified.

Dr. Umberto Veronesi who has been called the father of modern breast cancer therapy, summarized the state of the art sentinel lymphnode biopsy of the axilla as well as internal mammary lymph nodes. We have learned over the last several decades that 'more' is not necessary 'better', which includes surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. This is also true for the surgery of the axilla. Sentinel lymphnode biopsy now is here to stay and clear guidelines can be established. Many

questions remain unanswered, but these are all subject of well designed clinical trials.

Dr. Stefan Glück, summarized all adjuvant trastuzumab trials. It is clear that all five studies published or presented thus far show a relative risk reduction of recurrences by adding trastuzumab [Herceptin®] to current adjuvant treatments by approximately 50–60%. This is the case after short period of observation (in 2 years) and translates into survival benefit. The only major side effect that needs special attention is the potential cardiotoxicity reported up to 40% of all cases.

The highlight of the day was the presentation of the second Umberto Veronesi award for the future fight against breast cancer. Dr. Denis Slamon is the second awardee (after Dr. Hortobagyi in 2004). Consequently, Dr. Hortobagyi introduced Dr. Denis Slamon's lifetime achievements regarding breast cancer and introduced the speaker. The keynote lecture of Dr. Slamon was 'The future of breast cancer: a visionary view'. Dr. Slamon summarized the discovery and development of the proto-oncogene c-ERB-B2 in breast cancer, its protein HER2, and the development of targeted therapy which ultimately culminated in the adjuvant studies that Dr. Glück presented.

Following Dr. Slamon's lecture, the award was presented to him by Professor Veronesi, Dr. Silva, Dr. Hortobagyi and Dr. Glück.

In the lunch break, questions from the audience and prepared cases were discussed in the adjuvant therapy of breast cancer with Drs. Hortobagyi, Slamon, Sartor and Balducci as the moderators.

In the afternoon, three parallel sessions were conducted: Dr. Joyce Slingerland chaired the session of adjuvant chemotherapy, lecture by Dr. Hortobagyi, followed by adjuvant hormonal treatment by Dr. Pritchard

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as well as new prospective on ER-breast cancer, laboratory data from Dr. Slingerland's lab. This session was concluded by Dr. Hortobagyi who summarized the newest development in targeted therapy in breast cancer.

The two simultaneous sessions that were conducted: one on-site and one off-site. Moderated by Dora Escobedo for the nurses included return to wellness, symptoms management, pain management and hereditary breast cancer. The surgical hands-on session for surgeons off-site included a seminar of sentinel lymphnode dissection using blue dye and gama probe.

In the evening, 50 posters were presented, viewed and a small reception was included. The best three, were awarded and announced the next morning.

On Friday, July 28, Dr. Ruiz Zurrita opened a session with Dr. Gomez-Fernandez who spoke about predictors in breast cancer. Dr. Rodríguez-Cuevas lectured on screening in developing countries in Latin America and Dr. Velasquez for new imaging techniques. This was followed by surgical oncology: Changing trends in a surgical measure of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) including survival radiation therapy, paradigms shift by Dr. C. Sartor and the update of new radiation therapies by Dr. Cristiane Takita. Again, as before, the trend is towards less treatment might be as effective, and less toxic than full breast radiation.

At lunch time, case presentations and questions from the audience were presented on metastatic breast cancer moderated by Dr. Muñoz-Bermeo with Dr. Avisar and Dr. Vredenburgh.

In the afternoon, three sessions were conducted simultaneously. This included ductal lavage breast

construction and ultrasound guided biopsies by Drs. Donoway, Flores-Moreno, Blondeel, Zavala and Velasquez. The nursing seminar included a patient sensation after breast cancer surgery, treatment compliance, and the evolving role of the nurse practitioner in breast cancer care presented by Ms. Baron, Ms. Lynch and Ms. Calhoun, nurse practitioners.

The clinical session was chaired by Drs. Balducci and Rosenblatt and included hormonal management of metastatic disease as well as chemotherapy of metastatic disease by Dr. Kneuper-Hall and Dr. Valero respectively. Dr. Blackwell summarized novel therapy and promising on-going trials. Dr. Balducci who is one of the world's experts on cancer treatment in the elderly presented chemotherapy in this orphaned patients' population.

The highlight of the meeting on the social side was the dinner event by the poolside. All participants were listening to music and performance by Marina Freedman to famous tunes. The dinner included a generous buffet and drinks.

The last day of the conference, July 29 started with Drs. Sartor, Rosti and Tuveri who chaired the session which included breast cancer in the emerging world (Dr. de la Garza), breast cancer and pregnancy and fertility by Dr. María González-Angulo, and angiogenesis and apoptosis by Dr. Louis Chow. Breast reconstruction, neo adjuvant chemotherapy and neurologic complications concluded the program which was presented by Drs. Hurley, Blondeel and Vredenburgh.

Dr. Orlando Silva concluded by thanking all attendees for their committed participation and lively discussions during this meeting and agreeing to go out to beautiful Cancun in July. The next meeting will be held again in Cancun, July 23–26, 2008.