



ECCO

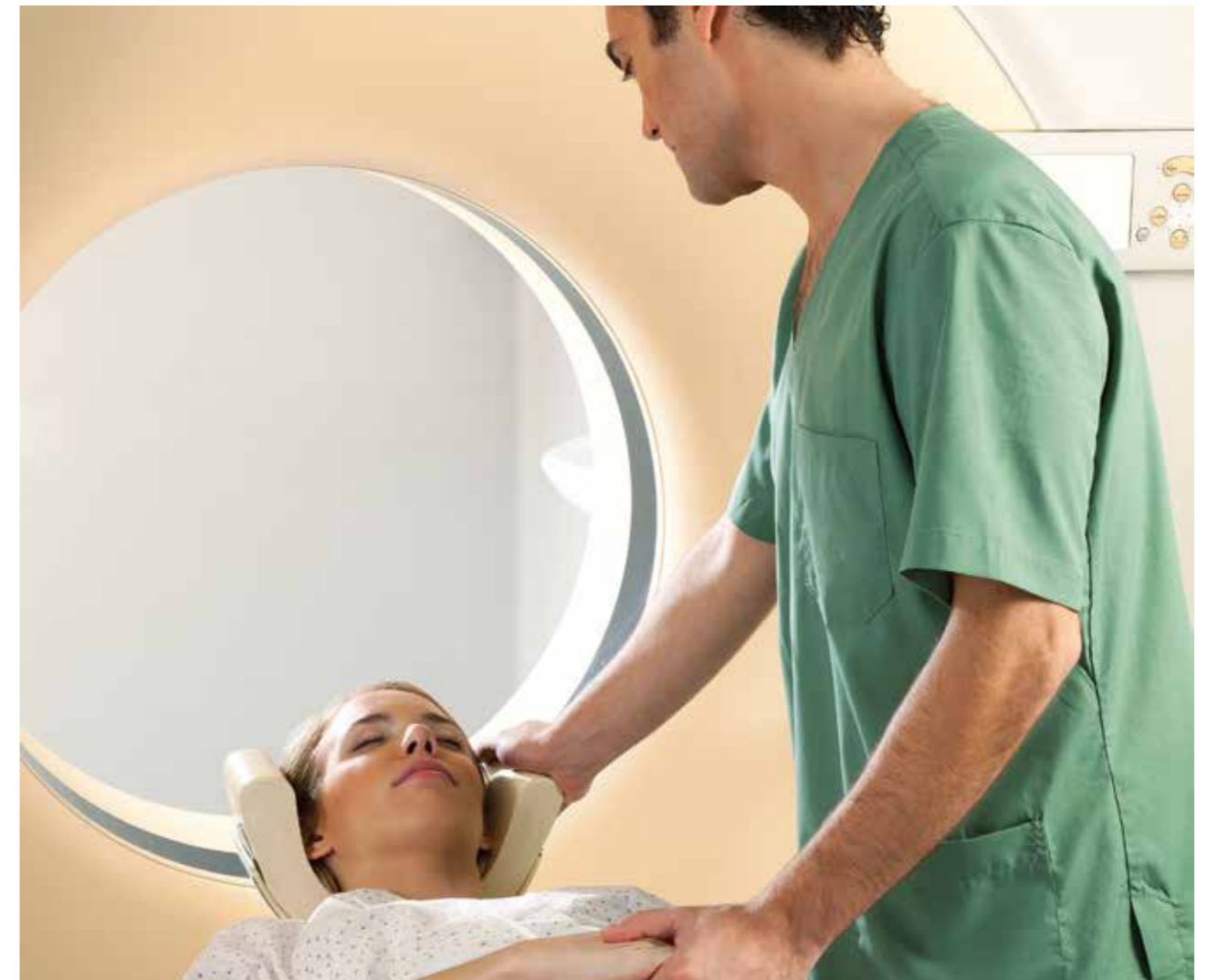
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Consisting of 24 Member Societies and representing over 80,000 professionals, ECCO is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to support the right of all European cancer patients to the best possible treatment and care. ECCO achieves this by connecting the European cancer community, creating awareness of patients' needs and encouraging progressive thinking in cancer policy and education. Through the organisation of international multidisciplinary meetings, ECCO actively promotes European cancer research, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care.

ECCO's 24 Member Societies include the European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM) and the European Association of Neuro-Oncology (EANO). By connecting these societies and organisations, a cohesive multi-disciplinary platform is provided with the aim of working together to improve outcomes for patients, and to be the unified voice of the European cancer community when addressing common policy issues. Here we speak with **Professor Peter Naredi – President of ECCO and Professor of Surgery at the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg** – who tells us about how ECCO works together with its member societies to accelerate cancer research, and to ensure that cancer remains at the top of the political agenda in Europe.



To begin, please briefly introduce ECCO, and tell us a little about its focus and scope.

Since 1981, ECCO has been the only multidisciplinary organisation connecting and responding to all stakeholders in oncology Europe-wide. We now have 24 member societies representing over 80,000 professionals in oncology.

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.

Please describe some of the other ways that ECCO facilitates cancer research in Europe.

ECCO has a strong focus on cancer research at its congress ECCO2017 (27-30 January 2017, Amsterdam). In this edition of the congress, we have built in a special workshop on the art of designing clinical trials. This workshop is developed by world class experts in clinical trial design and provides unique insights for congress delegates. ECCO aims to help disseminate the latest knowledge and practice in clinical trial design and to foster the education and advancement of young researchers. We have grants allowing such promising young scientists to come to the ECCO2017 congress and learn from the best experts

worldwide. We also organise the annual workshop Methods in Clinical Cancer Research with our partners AACR (American Association for Cancer Research), ESMO (European Society of Medical Oncology) and EORTC (European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer). ESMO and EORTC are two of our member societies and AACR is one of our strategic international partners. We believe in fostering the progress of cancer research by building bridges between researchers in Europe and researchers everywhere and by setting global standards of excellence together with our partners.

In what way does ECCO promote co-operation between researchers from different institutions and countries?

ECCO is a powerful multidisciplinary platform – we make it possible for our diverse member societies to connect and unite around common issues. We are dedicated to fostering multidisciplinary cooperation – in the ECCO environment, different oncology disciplines get to meet, learn about each other's areas of expertise and embark on joint projects. Our congress (ECCO2017, 27-30 January 2017, Amsterdam) and its multidisciplinary programme are a perfect embodiment of this philosophy. In addition to each discipline conducting research in its own field, through ECCO, they work closer together and patient outcomes are improved through the close partnership of medical oncologists, surgeons, radiation oncologists, nuclear medicine experts and many others.

Tell us a bit about ‘Oncopolicy’, and how ECCO helps to ensure that cancer research remains at the top of the EU agenda.

ECCO works with its member societies to identify key areas in oncology that shape and have the potential to undermine the treatment landscape for cancer patients in Europe. We refer to them as time bombs in oncology. They are debated at the ECCO congress in a multi-stakeholder environment and we come out of these discussions with ideas of concrete projects that address these time bombs. We have recently embarked on a project focusing on oncology nursing together with our member the European Society of Nursing Oncology (EONS). This project is a key element of our focus on the oncology workforce in Europe and its sustainable growth and quality. We are also working on a project on essential requirements for quality cancer care (ERQCC) dedicated to two tumour types in 2016: colorectal cancer and bone and soft tissue sarcomas. The outcomes of these projects will be presented at the ECCO congress and the delegates will have an opportunity to participate in their final stage of development. Our congress ECCO2017, which gathers together oncology professionals, patient advocates and policy makers also reviews the most important innovations in cancer research during the year and determines in its multi-stakeholder context which of these discoveries are of greatest consequence to clinical practice.

Describe one or two big challenges that currently face Europe’s cancer research agenda?

Over the past few years, we have seen impressive advances in the treatment of certain tumour types, but far from all. We need to focus on those where progress is still elusive and, in order to change this, we need to build on the breakthroughs in immunotherapy and precision medicine.



We also need to systematically evaluate what works to ensure that we invest in the best solutions for patients and that we can afford continued innovation.

What motivates ECCO’s approach to education and training?

ECCO places the patient at the heart of all its activities. We work with our ECCO Patient Advisory Committee to ensure that all our projects and the ECCO congress have the patient perspective built in. In this way, we bring together our diverse community of oncology professionals and the advocates representing cancer patient communities. We also aim to work more and more on addressing the issues faced by the growing population of cancer survivors. We believe in the importance of advanced multidisciplinary education of oncology professionals for the benefit of patients and this is the motivation behind the world class educational programme provided by our congress ECCO2017.

Finally, what does the future hold for cancer research in Europe, and what is ECCO’s role in that future?

We believe that the future lies in a strong multidisciplinary approach where we all work together to identify the best treatment regimens for each patient. Oncology disciplines will be working closer and closer together conducting joint research projects resulting in further advances for patients. ECCO will be there to foster such cooperation, provide a multidisciplinary review of innovations and facilitate their implementation in clinical practice through the ECCO congress and through our EU policy work.

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