



ESTRO 2023

From Innovation to Action

12-16 May 2023 | Vienna, Austria

ESTRO 2023 Report Young Track

A newcomer's perspective

For a first-time attendant, the 2023 ESTRO meeting in Vienna far exceeded expectations. Eager to make the most of it, I attended every seminar, talk, and session that I could – which obviously came nowhere close to all that I wanted to attend. Fortunately, the online platform makes it possible to catch up on everything that I missed; this is a much better way to use conference platforms than online or hybrid conferences.

The conference held special significance for me as it marked my return to on-site events after the pandemic. I seized the chance to ask questions during sessions and to make new connections over coffee in the exhibition hall. Judging by the lively discussions, both on-site and on Twitter, I was not the only one to cherish this opportunity. While acknowledging the progress made in online participation and collaboration during the last three challenging years, this experience confirmed the irreplaceable value of personal interaction. The young ESTRO (yESTRO) dinner offered a particularly great chance to network with other young researchers, radiation oncologists, and physicists from around the world. The organisers did a wonderful job of fostering new interactions: I came to the dinner knowing just two other attendees and spent most of the time talking to neither of them.

One of the main reasons that I came was to be present at the beginning of this year's ESTRO mentoring programme. As the mentees of the '2023 class', it was a privilege for us to talk during a speed-dating event to outstanding researchers who agreed to participate as mentors; based on our preferences, we were matched for the coming year. I am very excited about this opportunity and for the chance to strengthen my connections with other mentees.

For a person interested in radiobiology and personalised radiotherapy, listening to so many great talks and symposia on the topics was greatly encouraging. The number and quality of the interdisciplinary sessions, which combined clinical radiation oncology, medical physics, and biology, made ESTRO a very special and stimulating event. For each innovation, there is a long way to travel through 'death valleys' in the translational continuum, as outlined by Professor Yolande Lievens during the presidential symposium, but I look forward to seeing the innovative research that I heard about this year's progress to the clinical stage. I also share Prof Mei Ling Yap's hope that we manage to learn from recent difficult experiences, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression in Ukraine, to enable access to radiotherapy as a human right.

Overall, the congress in Vienna was an exceptional experience, enhanced by the beautiful setting that even a bit of rain couldn't harm. I look forward to attending future ESTRO meetings.



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