



Including Integrative Oncology in the EU4Health and Beating Cancer programmes

The European Parliament's Interest Group on Integrative Medicine and Health hosted: Integrative Oncology – the holistic approach to cancer care on 17th March.

Key speakers gave their insights and experience in Integrative cancer care. Patient benefits from holistic treatments such as mind-body techniques, acupuncture, herbs and dietary supplements were described. Collaborations between hospitals, universities and government were also outlined.

MEPs Michèle Rivasi (Greens/EFA) and Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP) emphasised that input from the experts in this field is important in their discussions on the EU4Health programme and the Beating Cancer Plan.

The Commission's Deputy Director-General for Health Dr Paolo Guglielmetti agreed that Integrative Oncology has a welcome place in the Beating Cancer Plan, and thanked the presenters for showing how Integrative Oncology supports patients.

Opening the event, MEP Michèle Rivasi said that around 40% of cancer patients use Complementary Medicine in addition to their conventional cancer treatment. Patients seek to optimize the therapeutic benefits of conventional treatment, minimize cancer symptoms or adverse effects from treatment, and enhance general well-being. There is a growing body of evidence supporting the use of integrative therapies as effective supportive care strategies in cancer patients. Integrative Oncology incorporates Complementary Medicine modalities into conventional cancer care.

MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen stipulated that the EU cancer plan should take into account the Complementary and Integrative approach. It needs to be patient-centred, and it is the patient's right to choose the treatment they prefer, based on qualified information. More research, funded by the EU and the Member States, is needed and should be a part of the EU4Health programme.

MEP Michèle Rivasi closed the meeting by saying that by focusing on only conventional cancer treatment the patient's well-being is neglected. There is a large amount of ignorance and misunderstanding about the Integrative approach of cancer treatment and how it can benefit the quality of life of cancer patients. Especially in integrative oncology cancer centres connected to hospitals and universities evidence-based treatments can be provided.



Key speakers

Professor Dr Claudia Witt, Professor of Medicine, University of Zürich, Switzerland. Director Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine, University Hospital of Zürich, Switzerland. Senior researcher, Institute for Social Medicine, Epidemiology and Health Economics, Charité University, Berlin, Germany.

Dr med Petra Voiss, Senior physician, Department of Internal and Integrative Medicine, Integrative Oncology and Interdisciplinary Breast Centre, Kliniken Essen-Mitte, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany.

Dra Natàlia Eres, Oncologist and Director of the Institute of Holistic Health, Medicine and Oncology IMOHE in Barcelona-Lleida, Spain.

Dr Jean-Lionel Bagot, Coordinating physician, Department of Integrative Medicine, Saint-Vincent Hospital Group in Strasbourg. Lecturer, Medicine and Pharmacy Faculty, Strasbourg University, France.

Professor Dr Yvonne Samstag, Professor of Cellular Immunology, Medical Faculty, University of Heidelberg, Germany. Spokesperson of "Research and Practice Initiative: Complementary & Integrative Health Care Baden-Württemberg (KIG)" and "Academic Centre for Complementary and Integrative Medicine" (AZKIM).

The event can be seen here: <https://cam-europe.eu/online-event-integrative-oncology/>

Contact information:

The secretariat of the MEP Interest Group on Integrative Medicine is managed by EUROCAM.

EUROCAM is the European foundation uniting umbrella organisations of patients, physicians, veterinarians and practitioners in the sector of Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine.

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