ESMO Expert Consensus Statements: A new resource to offering doctors practical guidance in unmet areas of oncology

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ESMO, the leading professional organization for medical oncology, announces a new series of resources designed to guide physicians in areas of oncological practice not covered by guidelines, where current evidence is insufficient to evenly inform clinical decision-making. The
ESMO Expert Consensus Statements on the Management of EGFR Mutant Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer published this month in *Annals of Oncology* constitute an example of the ongoing effort by ESMO to bring together leading specialists in the field to shed light on issues in cancer care that are either controversial or represent burning questions for the practicing oncologists.

"The pace of progress in oncology, driven simultaneously by advances in our molecular understanding of cancer and by the unprecedented number of new medicines entering the clinic, inevitably creates gaps in evidence that leave us, as physicians, in doubt about how best to manage certain cases in our practice," said ESMO Director of Education Prof. Florian Lordick, University of Leipzig, Germany. "The ESMO Expert Consensus Statements will meet clinicians in these gaps to offer orientation until more robust data becomes available, in line with ESMO's commitment to providing doctors with continuous education and ensuring access to high-quality care for all cancer patients."

Following a modified methodology developed by ESMO in order to guide cancer patient management during the COVID-19 pandemic, the newly published paper presents the results of a consensus-building process on EGFR mutant non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) held by ESMO in 2021. The virtual meeting brought together a multidisciplinary panel of 34 international experts on lung cancer to discuss open questions in the management of this tumor subtype, including patient needs and perspectives represented by EGFR-positive patient advocate Jill Feldman.

The introduction of EGFR-targeted therapy in the last 15 years has drastically changed the treatment landscape of a disease representing about 15% of non-small cell lung cancers, and there are areas where the optimal approach is still unclear. For example, when it comes to choosing a treatment for patients with concurrent targetable mutations
besides EGFR. "We explored this and other issues where the evidence is
either limited or conflicting with the aim of producing actionable
insights to support oncologists' decision-making in situations that
currently cannot be adequately addressed in the evidence-based ESMO
Clinical Practice Guidelines," said ESMO Chief Medical Officer and
paper co-author Prof. George Pentheroudakis explaining the importance
of this work.

A total of 29 consensus statements were developed covering the role of
tissue and biomarker analyses, treatment and follow-up approaches for
both early-stage and metastatic disease, as well as the need to initiate
specific molecular-driven and molecular-agnostic clinical trials in the
future. "Each statement is supported by findings from the panel
discussions and accompanied by consensus recommendations with a
summary of the evidence supporting them, thus offering a detailed
picture for doctors to consider how to translate it to individual patients in
their practice," Pentheroudakis added.

Noting that efforts are already underway to apply this methodology to
further areas of oncological care where uncertainty exists—among them,
cancer survivorship care and research, the optimisation of the
management of cancer patients treated with radiotherapy concurrently
with immunotherapy or targeted agents, and the management of
pregnancy-associated breast cancer—Pentheroudakis concluded that
"this document stands as a point of reference for future therapeutic steps
in the field of EGFR mutant non-small cell lung cancer, at a time when
new perspectives are continuing to emerge for pathologies with EGFR
mutations thanks to the approval of new drugs for specific alterations
and the active search for strategies to optimize first-line treatment and
better manage resistance. Going forward, ESMO will work consistently
to provide the best answers available to other pressing questions that
oncology professionals—and patients—need us to address."

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