

5th ASPIC International Congress - 30 June & 1 July 2022, at the IPO-Porto Auditorium

After two years of virtual meetings, this congress was an excellent opportunity to physically meet each other again and to learn, face-to-face, about new developments in cancer research, share results and discoveries through oral presentations and through a big and participative Poster Session.

The Congress had 214 participants (including speakers and members of cancer patient's associations), mostly from Portugal, but also from Spain, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Greece - which allowed the feeling of an international scientific atmosphere - and were submitted more than 80 abstracts.

The whole program had an outstanding group of invited speakers: Fátima Vaz (IPO-Lisbon), Christoph Plass (DKFZ German Cancer Research Center), Fred van Leeuwen (NKI – Netherlands Cancer Institute), Irene Braña (Vall d'Hebron University Hospital), Salomé Pinho (i3S/FMUP/ICBAS), Evi Lianidou (University of Athens) – EACR Lecture, Roger Gomis (IRB Barcelona) – ASEICA Lecture, Amedeo Amedei (University of Florence), Carlos Eduardo de Andrea (Universidade de Navarra), Marcel Kool (Hopp Children's Cancer Center Heidelberg & Princess Maxima, Center Pediatric Oncology Utrecht) and Fernando López-Ríos (12 de Octubre University Hospital Spain).

The organization also would like to highlight the high level of the eight communications selected from the abstracts (included in the main scientific programme), the multidisciplinary scope of the scientific programme and the excellence of the abstracts submitted by participants. We must also emphasize the Poster Session of the 5th ASPIC International Congress: the organization not only dedicated two days of the congress to the debate and exchange of ideas, but also organized the «APISC Patients Advocates Poster Walkthrough». This initiative brought together researchers and members of six cancer patient associations: Acreditar, Rui Osório de Castro Foundation (FROC), EVITA, Mama Help, Careca Power and Europacolón. We believe that researchers gain a lot from the presence of patients, as they give them more focus to move forward with their work, feeling that what they do, can putatively improve the lives of future patients.

From the submitted abstracts, the Scientific Evaluation Committee selected eight to integrate the scientific programme and to be presented as oral communication. These talks were also evaluated by the Scientific Evaluation Committee and the best one - «Chitosan/γ-PGA nanoparticles-based immunotherapy as adjuvant to IFN-γ in breast cancer», by Flávia Castro (i3S) - received the «Raquel Seruca Prize» this award, promoted by ASPIC, was created to honour the clinician and researcher Raquel Seruca (1962-2022), also an ASPIC member, whose career contributed unequivocally to oncology research at a national and international level. ASPIC also made a special tribute video about Raquel Seruca. It was a very beautiful and emotional moment.

We also add the feedback of some of the invited speakers and members of patients' associations:

Fred van Leeuwen: «Wonderful meeting. I very much enjoyed the science, the informal interactions, and the meetings with the students during the poster sessions. Everything was very well organized».

Marcel Kool: «Thanks a lot for inviting me to this meeting and organizing everything so smoothly! I enjoyed it very much!»

Evi Lianidou: «The congress was very well organized, interesting and the congress dinner by the ocean was perfect. It was great to meet young and passionate cancer researchers in such a friendly atmosphere».

Christoph Plass: «I enjoyed the time and was impressed by the quality of work presented, the discussions and in particular also from work discussed by the young colleagues from Portugal!»

Roger Gomis: «Superb organization and very interesting science!»

Fernando Lopez-Rios: «It was really a fantastic experience, I was really touched by the award ceremony. Thank you so much for this opportunity!»

Salomé Pinho: «Congratulations for the great meeting and for the high quality of the scientific program!»

Felicidade Ferreira (Mama Help Association): «Para os doentes é muito gratificante perceber que se continua a investigar para podermos ultrapassar esta doença com sucesso e com a melhor qualidade de vida possível. Para nós, vocês são uns verdadeiros heróis.

EACR posters prizes:

- **Cristina Amaral** (UCIBIO.REQUIMTE, Faculty of Pharmacy University of Porto, Portugal)

A new aromatase inhibitor (AI) as multi-target compound in estrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancer cells

- **Liliana Santos** (Faculty of Medicine, University of Coimbra, Portugal)

Trastuzumab-resistant HER2+ Brain Tropic Breast Cancer Cells Disrupt the Blood-Brain Barrier: a Potential Route for Brain Drug Delivery

- **Lídia Maria Pereira Faria** (i3S, University of Porto, Portugal)

Activation of the Actin/MRTF-A/SRF signalling pathway in premalignant mammary epithelial cells by P-cadherin is essential for transformation



Fig 1 – Cross section of Participants



Fig 2 – EACR poster prizes (from left to the right: ASPIC’s president, Joana Paredes, two of the three winners – Lídia Faria and Liliana Santos – and the chair of the Scientific Evaluation Committee, Bruno Costa Silva).

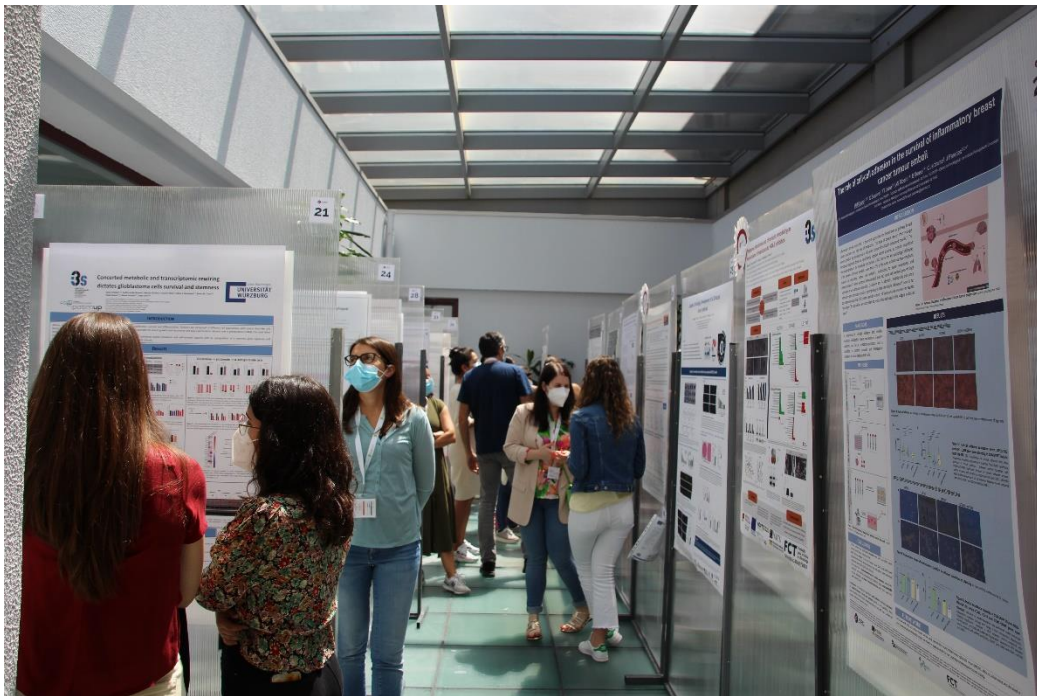


Fig 3 – Poster Session