“Winning this EONS award made us so proud”

The Novice Research Dissemination Award was initiated by the EONS Research Working Group to encourage cancer nurses who have previously not presented at an international conference, to disseminate research in which they have participated. Awardees, Joyce Roijen from Maastricht, the Netherlands and Elif Sözery from Ankara, Turkey, presented their work at EONS-9.

Introducing the awardees, Lena Sharp, EONS Board member and co-chair of the EONS Education Working Group, said: “Out of 43 award applications, the review group selected two winners, who received free registration and funding for travel and accommodation for the EONS-9 conference.

“The first awardee, Joyce Roijen, from Maastricht, the Netherlands, presented her team’s work on fertility counselling in young women with breast cancer, before adjuvant chemotherapy. (You can read more about the study in this article.)

“The second awardee, Elif Sözery, from Ankara, Turkey, presented the results from a study on resilience and burnout among oncology nurses. Data was collected using questionnaires (Resilience Scale for Adults and the Maslach Burnout Inventory) from nurses working in chemotherapy day units or oncological wards. The results showed high risk for burnout among the nurses in the study.

“After the presentations, the two awardees answered questions and received feedback from the conference audience. Joyce was asked to describe the nurses’ role in the infertility team and Elif was encouraged to go ahead and publish her results.”

THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT
Joyce Roijen told EONS Magazine:
EONS-9, in Istanbul, was an inspiring and well-organised conference. Nurses from different countries were represented, which gave me a sense of pride. I was proud to be a nurse and proud to see that we work with everyone to develop our profession to a higher level. In addition to providing patient care, there was also a lot of attention on quality improvement through doing nursing research. I was proud to have the opportunity to present the data on our survey at a large conference like EONS.

My presentation
Young women with breast cancer are a particular, but very important, group. In my work as a nurse practitioner training at the University Medical Centre, Maastricht, the Netherlands, I focus on breast cancer, specialising in the specific problems surrounding young woman with breast cancer.

Adjuvant chemotherapy in young patients with breast cancer can cause permanent infertility. Loss of fertility after breast cancer treatment negatively impacts on the quality of life of young patients. The long-term survival after breast cancer is getting better, and therefore there is more and more attention given to the quality of life in the long term.

How is the quality of life of the young women? And, is there a difference between women who are counselled about fertility problems and women who are not? Investigating these questions, my colleagues and I started our research, Fertility counselling in young women with breast cancer: a cross-sectional study.

Sixty-five women, who were diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer between the ages of 18 and 42 years, completed several quality of life questionnaires. Participants were asked if they received counselling by a fertility specialist and if they underwent fertility preservation treatment. In conclusion, we can say that fertility counselling prior to breast cancer treatment has a positive influence on quality of life in young women with breast cancer. We recommend that women wanting to have children are referred to a dedicated medical oncologist and fertility specialist for intensive counselling.

You could ask yourself why the conclusion that fertility preservation is related to the desire to have children is so special. It seems obvious, but it was not when we started this project four years ago. In recent years, fertility counselling has received increased attention, which is a major step forward.

Special thanks to professor Tjan-Heijnen and the rest of the team who worked with us enthusiastically on this project. For me and my colleague, Doris van Abbema, this was our first study. It was a big surprise to hear our team’s abstract was selected for oral presentation and we had won an award. This has made us very proud!