Reigniting the passion for oncology nursing

Once again EONS organised a successful Masterclass in oncology nursing in collaboration with the European School of Oncology (ESO). This was the eighth such Masterclass, and was held in the beautiful setting of the Wolfsberg Conference Centre, near Zurich, Switzerland.

This year’s Masterclass, from 7-12 March 2015, hit a record, both in terms of the numbers of nurses (28) and countries represented (15).

It started by mixing nurses and physicians in small groups for communication skills workshops held by Andrew Hoy and Anne Arber, in collaboration with professional actors. Parallel to these workshops, introductory sessions were held discussing expectations and goals. In a third session, on team work, the focus was on multi-professional collaboration, professional communication and safety.

The nurses participated in clinical medical sessions, covering state-of-the-art treatment of the different site-specific cancers. The nurses’ programme included overviews on targeted therapies and radiotherapy, but also covered topics such as bone health, extravasations, radiodermatitis and sexuality. All of the participants had sent in interesting patient cases, some of which were selected for presentation and discussion with the rest of the group. Very active participation on key issues was a highlight of the case studies.

New sessions this year included cultural differences in cancer care, clinical trials and problem-based learning, as well as discovering how to interpret research papers. There were more joint sessions with the physicians on important...
After 13 years working in the oncology setting, the Masterclass has completely reignited my passion for oncology nursing. Thank you all.
Catriona Duggan, Ireland

When someone gives you the opportunity to be part of a five-day course, every minute is valuable. You don’t want to miss a thing – coffee breaks were a tremendous opportunity for exchanging thoughts, meeting colleagues from around the world and creating new links for future collaboration.

However, the most important thing was the opportunity to develop my career as a clinical nurse specialist through the interactive presentations, followed by lively discussions, exposing me to practice care standards.
Nurit Schneider, Israel

I was enriched by the educational lectures as well as meeting participants from all over Europe and sharing experience and identifying common concerns that impact upon oncology nursing practice. Through a supportive learning environment we were able to identify possible solutions to complex nursing problems. I questioned the restraints of my own practice and identified areas for change. My new-found knowledge and enthusiasm has driven me to formulate plans to improve patient experience in my own practice area.
Michelle Lewington, UK

It was an honour to be selected to participate, as well as to meet other colleagues from different countries, and share my experience with them. I was very impressed with this event – the lectures were very effective, touched on real work and were rich in knowledge, and of course, the lecturers were confident and knowledgeable as well as good facilitators.

The subjects discussed gave me clues in my way of thinking, how to communicate, and how to be a role model. When I had a little time with my colleagues in the ward, I just wanted to discuss the take-home messages from the communication skills workshops. They found them fantastic and will use them as a basis to start changes in our services.
Omar Al Hawamdeh, Palestine

An experience of a lifetime, educationally and culturally. Great mentors, top class knowledge, beautiful venue, new friends. Inspiring, invigorating! Genuinely, this Masterclass has not only been beneficial for me academically but it also ignited a desire in me personally – to achieve all that I can in my career; to be the best that I can be and to help others to do likewise!
Mairead Lyons, Ireland

A great turning point for nurses and physicians, in order to believe shared care and knowledge will produce better outcomes for patients and their families.
Joao Duarte, UK

The lectures were accessible, colourful, clear and precise. I learned the most sharing in small groups. I have heard a number of innovations to improve my approach to patients as well as in a team. The Masterclass was one big positive experience for me and my organisation.
Ana Citmanov, Slovenia

For me, I valued the opportunity to reflect the very last day on what the Masterclass meant for each of us. It provided a very important closing. As we reflected on the goals with which we all arrived in Ermatingen and what we were actually taking back with us – that, to me, felt priceless.
I was inspired by what many said they had learnt, discovered or decided to do as a result of “having lived the Masterclass”. We learn best when reflecting on our experiences.
Iveta Nohavova, Czech republic

multi-professional topics, such as fertility and pregnancy, physical activity and cancer, and advanced nursing roles. Erik van Muilekom, Mary Wells and Daniel Kelly from the EONS Board joined for parts of the Masterclass to share their expertise.

The Masterclass finished with a learning test; the nurse with the highest score was Susana Pedro from Portugal.

Preliminary planning has already started for the next Masterclass in 2016 (12-17 March) so nurses are urged to make a note in their diaries. A call for applications will appear on the EONS website and in the newsletter.