The treatment of cancer patients during COVID19 pandemia

Our country is facing a massive health crisis that is challenging our human and structural resources.

Oncological patients are dealing with a double dare: resist COVID-19 infection and fighting cancer, which is possibly more dangerous than the infection itself.

It is difficult to understand the length of this emergency and the effect on our national and regional health systems.

In the meantime, doctors, healthcare workers, patients and their families are called to continue their daily battle against cancer.

Our societies, always at the forefront of this important fight, are working hard to endure difficulties and offer the best care possible at the moment.

In this context, each society offers to its healthcare practitioner practical guidelines to deal with oncological patients during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Furthermore, our societies agreed to limit follow up appointments and second opinions, and to prefer computing resources such as regional oncological networks, national networks for rare cancers, and remote appointments.

Travels for emergent conditions and urgent treatments, mostly if not available in the patient's region, will be evaluated for each single case.

Based on the regional dispositions, a priority scale has been established with the hospital administrations, in order to optimize the available resources and continue to offer the best possible care to our patients.

The priorities are based on tumor biology, patient's conditions, tumor site and treatment characteristics.

When possible, shorter treatment will be preferred, albeit in line with the most recent guidelines.

We will encounter patients that need immediate care, others that can be deferred, and finally others that will need to be discussed in order to define the best possible treatment in the contingent situation.

Our societies will constantly monitor the situation to get you real-time updates on the recommendations for each specific disease, based on the natural evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak. The recommendation will also need to be tailored to the contingency of each specific region.

Ensuring the usual commitment and even more devotion to overcome the crisis, may our thoughts be with all our colleagues and patients who are facing these challenging times.

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