

TWO PROJECTS SELECTED AND \$500,000 USD ALLOCATED TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EARLY BREAST CANCER PATIENTS IN EUROPE

Two projects have been selected in response to the call for proposals supported by Eli Lilly and Company, in collaboration with Sharing Progress in Cancer Care (SPCC). The initiative is now entering the period of performance facilitating the execution of the two winning programmes, scheduled for completion by December 2025.

Bellinzona, 6 May 2024 – The “[Improving Care of Early Breast Cancer \(EBC\) Patients in Europe – 2023/2024 RFP Project – Call for Grants](#)” initiative, supported by Eli Lilly and Company in collaboration with SPCC, has reached its second stage after the conclusion of the initial phase, with two projects selected in response to the call for proposals.

The RFP aims to convene healthcare professionals and innovative organisations to identify gaps in the treatment of Early Breast Cancer and develop strategies to enhance care and address those gaps. Now, SPCC and Lilly pledge to finance the two winning projects that will conduct in-depth analyses to identify quality and performance gaps in the treatment of Early Breast Cancer (EBC), understanding the needs of the individuals targeted by the intervention. The objectives of the initiative encompass facilitating healthcare systems and providers to involve patients, caregivers, and families in collaborative decision-making, alongside employing evidence-based educational strategies aligned with the desired outcomes of the intervention.

The urge for such a project is based on a concrete, evidence-based need.

Breast cancer stands as the prevalent cancer diagnosis for women across the globe, [topping the charts in 157 nations](#) (*) and constituting [a quarter of all cancer cases](#) (*). It ranks second in frequency across genders and claims the highest mortality rate among women due to cancer. With approximately 2.3 million new cases in 2022 alone, breast cancer accounted for nearly [one-ninth of all cancers diagnosed globally](#) (*). In the same year, an estimated [669,418 deaths were attributed to breast cancer](#) (*), with a significant portion occurring in regions with limited resources.

Given the escalating global burden of breast cancer and its profound impact on public health, there is an urgent need for concerted efforts to mitigate its effects and improve outcomes for those affected. Against this backdrop, initiatives addressing this pressing concern assume unprecedented significance.

This call for proposals presents a unique opportunity to explore practical solutions that would benefit not only patients, their caregivers, and families but also the intricate political and healthcare system tasked with ensuring swift and convenient access to diagnostics and care for the population.

The initiative attracted interest from 14 projects (from Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland). From these, an independent review panel established by SPCC selected the two winners, which were awarded grants for a total of \$ 500,000 USD.

The Panel of Expert Reviewers

Luis Costa, Hospital Santa Maria and Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

Amanda Drury, EONS Board, Chair of the Research Working Group, Dublin, Ireland

Martina Fontana, EUROPA DONNA Policy and Research Officer, Milan, Italy

Joseph Gligorov, Hospital Tenon Ap-Hp, Paris, France

Nadia Harbeck, Breast Center, LMU University Hospital, Munich, Germany

Roberto Orecchia, IEO European Institute of Oncology IRCCS, Milan, Italy

Frederique Penault-Llorca, Jean Perrin Center, Clermont-Ferrand, France

Isabel T. Rubio, Breast Surgical Unit, Clínica Universidad de Navarra, Madrid, Spain

Projects Awarded

IEO European Institute of Oncology IRCCS, Italy – www.ieo.it/

“Development and testing of a patient’s decision aid for breast cancer at an early stage: a new tool to promote patient’s engagement in their healthcare process”

The early diagnosis of breast cancer profoundly affects women, causing significant physical and emotional changes that may hinder patient engagement and treatment adherence. Establishing strong doctor-patient communication and relationships during initial consultations is crucial for enhancing care and patient’s quality of life. Understanding patients' experiences, needs, and preferences, along with physicians' perspectives on communication, is essential for promoting shared decision-making (SDM). This project proposes developing an interactive Patient Decision Aid (PDA) tailored to patients' needs to facilitate SDM during medical consultations. Through a mixed-method analysis involving interviews with breast cancer patients and oncology’s, the study assesses information needs, develop the PDA, and test its impact on SDM and quality of life. The ultimate goal is to refine the PDA based on feedback and produce a final version aligned with both patient and physician preferences.

LMU University Hospital, Germany – www.lmu-klinikum.de/

“Care improvement for early breast cancer patients treated with oral tumor therapy (CarEoTT)”

In recent years, targeted therapies previously standard for hormone receptor-positive (HR+/HER2-neg) metastatic breast cancer (MBC) have been expanded to include high-risk breast cancer in the adjuvant setting.

This expansion in complex oral tumour therapy management (OTT) is expected to lead to a rapid increase in patient numbers and duration of therapies up to 3 years in EBC, necessitating a re-evaluation of therapy management practices. Additionally, oral tumour therapies pose specific challenges, emphasizing the need for enhanced and personalized patient care.

Given the complexity of care for these patients, CarEoTT aims to implement and evaluate standardized oral therapy consultation sessions, involving trained non-doctoral staff to improve patient adherence and facilitate shared decision-making with the oncology team.

The project, adopting an interdisciplinary approach inclusive of specialized nurses and pharmacists, will be performed in Germany and Italy, where interprofessional care is not yet fully established. Furthermore, e-Health based support has proven helpful for oncologists, nurses, and patients during oral therapy treatment. In CarEoTT, the app Cankado is used for improvement of adherence, side effect management and patient empowerment.

SPCC – Who we are

[Sharing Progress in Cancer Care](#) (SPCC) is an independent non-profit organisation, dedicated to providing projects, programmes and initiatives (live and online) to share and integrate knowledge and information on scientific progress, innovation, and best practices in the Cancer Care Continuum from prevention to early diagnosis, treatment, and support after treatment.

SPCC publishes the independent medical magazine [Cancerworld](#), contributed to by leading international experts, and offers comprehensive resources through [OncoCorner](#) (www.oncocorner.net), its e-learning educational platform.

(*) see CANCER TODAY - International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)