

Giving Thanks

In my family, 3 generations gather on Thanksgiving Day at the home of a niece or nephew. It's the one time of the year that everyone is expected to show up, and by the end of the day, everyone's news for the year has been shared and new members of the family introduced. By that time, we have also eaten much more than we should, so we say our goodbyes and go home again to our private lives.

Having just returned from the annual ESMO meeting, I realize that our clinical oncology family around the world is much more connected. At one time, the ASCO annual meeting was the primary event for sharing clinical data and reuniting with colleagues. Now that the ESMO meeting has grown and matured (nearly 30,000 participants registered!), we have a second opportunity to present new data and reunite. Add to this the NCCN Annual Conference and the small disease-oriented meetings sponsored by both ASCO and ESMO, and there are even more opportunities. As an example, in my world of gastrointestinal cancers, we can meet in January at the GI Symposium cosponsored by ASCO, American Society for Radiation Oncology, Society of Surgical Oncology, and American Gastroenterological Association; in March at the NCCN Annual Conference; in early June at the ASCO Annual Conference; in July at the ESMO GI World Conference; and in October at the annual ESMO Congress.

This cycle of meetings can accommodate many important initiatives. Companies seeking to release pivotal findings of clinical trials have numerous opportunities. The earlier these results get to the podium, the earlier a new drug can get to regulatory agencies for approval, and the earlier the drug can reach patients. The frequent meetings also provide opportunities for working groups to conduct business, for investigator and steering committees to convene, for new collaborations to form, and so on.

From a personal perspective, these meetings also give me many opportunities to see cherished friends and colleagues who I have collaborated with over many years. The meetings also allow me to see the new generation of leaders emerging in their respective fields. What a gift!

Although I realize that time and resources are precious and that not everyone has the luxury to travel to each meeting opportunity, I am very grateful that the venues exist. Both ASCO and ESMO offer virtual attendance that make it possible to participate from anywhere.

I encourage you all, especially my academic colleagues, to consider being active members of these organizations. In a way, our world is very small, and international connections are critical to accomplish many research objectives. In addition, it is very helpful to understand the cultural nuances or other regional barriers that sometimes affect accrual to trials or even dissemination of results.

Overall, I am very grateful for my international oncology community and for the many opportunities that come in my direction from around the world. And I expect this sentiment is shared by many of you as well. Happy Thanksgiving!



MARGARET TEMPERO, MD

Margaret Tempero, MD, is a Professor of Medicine and Director of the UCSF Pancreas Center and editor-in-chief of *JNCCN*. Her research career has focused on pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, especially in the area of investigational therapeutics. Dr. Tempero has served on the ASCO Board of Directors and as ASCO President. She currently serves on the ASCO Conquer Cancer Foundation Board. She codirected the AACR/ASCO Methods in Clinical Cancer Research and taught this course and similar courses in Europe and Australia. She was founding Chair of the NCI Clinical Oncology Study Section and served as a member and Chair of the NCI Board of Scientific Counselors Subcommittee A. She is a member of the Scientific Steering Committee and Chair of the Clinical and Translational Study Section for the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas. She is or has been on the Scientific Advisory Boards of the Lustgarten Foundation, the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, the V Foundation, The Alberta Canada Cancer Board, and the EORTC. She served as a member of the Oncology Drug Advisory Committee for the FDA. She has served as Deputy Director and Interim Director for the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center. She is Chief Emeritus of the Division of Medical Oncology at UCSF. She served as the founding Deputy Director and was later Director of Research Programs at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.

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