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Full Reference: Hersch J, Butow P, O’Hara L, Ballinger M, Haas M, Cockburn C, Bartley N, Laidsaar-Powell R, McCaffery K, & Juraskova I. Collaboratively developing a novel online intervention to improve COnsent in GENomic Testing (CoGenT) in oncology.

Conference/Meeting Name: World Congress of Psycho-Oncology

Location: Milan, Italy

Dates: 31 August to 3 September

Presentation Type: Oral presentation within symposium

The 2023 World Congress of Psycho-Oncology was the 24th annual conference under the auspices of the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS). IPOS was founded to foster international multidisciplinary communication about clinical, educational and research issues relating to psycho-oncology. It provides leadership in research on psychosocial factors that affect clinical outcomes and quality of life of cancer patients and their loved ones. IPOS aims to encourage psychosocial principles and a humanistic approach in cancer care, stimulate research and develop training so psychosocial care may be integrated with all clinical oncologic specialties for optimal patient care.

The World Congress of Psycho-Oncology has a focus on both translational cancer research and evidence based clinical practice in psycho-oncology. The overarching theme for the 2023 meeting was: *Championing our Patients’ Future Through Collaboration and Innovation in Psycho-Oncology*. A key thematic area for the conference program was “Identification of evidence-based psycho-social interventions able to foster translational psycho-oncology”.

This conference brought together a diverse international body of healthcare professionals (including psychologists, oncologists, nurses and more), academic researchers, patient advocates, government representatives and policymakers. There were more than 800 participants from 61 countries, making for a very full program. It was a genuinely collaborative event for researchers and clinicians to meet, interact, and share their work. In addition to well-respected research leaders in the field, the invited speakers also included influential figures on the world stage such as the European Commissioner for Health and a member of the World Health Organisation’s Department of Universal Health Coverage.

This was the first time in six years that I have travelled overseas for a conference – which is something I used to do very regularly before the disruption caused by having two children (not to mention the Covid pandemic). So it was really nice to resume this aspect of my academic career and (re)connect with colleagues I hadn’t met before or don’t see often. For example, I met in person a researcher from the Netherlands whom I had only met via teleconference, after she reached out to chat about our mutual interests a few years ago.

It was also my first time attending a psycho-oncology conference, as well as my first international conference since moving into the area of cancer genomics. There was an interesting plenary session devoted to genomics, during which one invited speaker outlined ‘Genomics and new trends in oncology’ and the other spoke about ‘New opportunities in psycho-oncology: social regulation of the cancer genome’. The latter presentation delved into the exciting field of human social genomics, which provides an evolutionarily informed, multilevel framework for understanding how positive and negative social-environmental experiences affect the genome to impact lifelong health, well-being, behaviour, and longevity.