



# European Association for Cancer Education

## 32nd Annual Scientific Meeting

### **BARRIERS IN CANCER COMMUNICATION: IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS**

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Cancer education has been assumed as a critical area to integrate an effort on cancer control which requires a solid research effort to provide impactful education solutions. Health literacy, in particular cancer literacy, the capacity to read or listen and understand (thus, to interpret) the message transmitted and also dependent on the individual's literacy is essential to understand and cope with the disease. Low cancer literacy could have serious implications along the cancer continuum, especially on prevention, screening and treatment.

In this perspective, our research has been focused on the development of cancer education programs for different populations, as also evaluation protocols and instruments for cancer education interventions. Thus, we will present two different interventions, one focused on schools and its potential to improve cancer prevention on students, teachers and their families and another one based on health professionals and patients.

The first one, supports that early interventions, tailored and targeted to specific groups, and monitored, can contribute to positive and durable changes in prevention, specifically regarding cancer prevention, aiming to understand a reality shaped by the traditional health prevention campaigns that result from the interaction of the current epidemiological, cultural and social scenario about cancer, regarding the potential of the schools as a vehicle for cancer education, as well as to transform that reality (in this case, teachers and students cancer literacy).

On the other side, the communication gap between health professionals and patients or caregivers is frequent and highly detrimental for disease outcome. Limited communication skills of healthcare professionals and reduced health literacy of patients are conditioning the health information exchange. In cancer care, this gap is even more critical, so our proposal will contribute towards the improvement of communication between cancer patients and health care providers, increasing patients' health literacy and developing health professionals' communication skills that consequently will positively impact the health outcomes.

To successfully accomplish what we have done so far, we promote innovative solutions based on targeted educational interventions to improve cancer literacy of specific populations. Cancer prevention education research will be the most advantageous strategy to produce impactful educational solutions that empower citizens and significantly reduce cancer burden in future generations.

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