

Session R. Miscellanea

R25 “Green oncology”: a new paradigm for medical oncology

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For many years medicine has followed a biomedical model based on linear thinking and a disease-oriented doctor-patient relationship. Today this framework must be replaced by a biopsychosocial model based on complexity theory and a person-oriented medical team-patient relationship. However, the new model is already proving no longer adequate or appropriate, and current events are urging us to develop an ecological model in which the medical team takes into account both individual illness and population health as a whole, since all of us are part of the biosphere. In recent years, the rising costs of cancer treatment have raised a serious

issue of economic sustainability and Medical Oncology is without doubt the medical specialty that today has pressing economic problems, as does the population of our planet. We now need to rapidly address this issue, and everyone of us must try to reduce his ecological footprint, measured as CO₂ production. Medical oncologists need to reduce the ecological footprint of their professional activity by lowering the consumption of economic resources and avoiding environmental damage as much as possible. This new paradigm is endorsed by the Italian College of Hospital Medical Oncology Directors (CIPOMO). A working group of this organisation has drafted the “Green Oncology Position Paper”: a proposal (in accordance with International Guidelines) to all Italian oncologists, aiming for the same end results; for a more appropriate management of health care and the careful use of resources in order to protect the environment and the ecosystem during the daily exercise of their professional activities, the 11 items can be found at www.cipomo.it. The economic crisis must oblige us to make urgent choices regarding appropriateness and spending. We need a new paradigm, where Medical Humanities play the same role as high technology medicine and where it is accepted that the medical oncologist is the expert of neoplastic disease and the patient is “the expert” of his own “life”. We must be aware that “A new approach to medicine is possible”: in this approach the central point is the patient, but even more important is the medical-patient relationship, avoiding any risk of over diagnosis and over treatment. In our opinion the key word of future Medical Oncology will be “Resilience”. In summary Green Oncology is the new paradigm that can give us not only economic but also environmental sustainability.