

Quality cancer care—not just a matter of anti-cancer medicines

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ESMO, the leading professional organisation for medical oncology, shares concerns expressed in a scientific paper and reflected in the international media about the rising costs of cancer medicines.

The authors of the *Journal of Oncology Practice* paper used both the ESMO Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale (ESMO-MCBS) and ASCO's Value Framework to assess whether the clinical benefits of novel anticancer drugs have increased over time in parallel with increasing pricing. The authors concluded that while costs of these have risen over the past decade, their [clinical benefit](#) has not improved proportionally.

The ESMO-MCBS uses a rational, structured and consistent approach to grade the magnitude of clinical benefit that can be expected from anticancer treatments.

Prof. Elisabeth de Vries, Chair of the ESMO Cancer Medicines Committee and the ESMO-MCBS Working Group, said: "The ESMO-MCBS provides unbiased information to help guide physicians and decision makers to grade drugs newly approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) by assessing their clinical benefit. It is an important first step in the major and ongoing task of evaluating value in cancer care which is essential for the appropriate use of limited public funds in delivering cost-effective and more affordable cancer care."

Prof. Josep Taberero, ESMO President, said: "Access to anticancer

medicines is an essential component of high quality cancer care, hence affordability is crucial in providing optimal treatment and patient care." There are however many additional critical factors. "Other major considerations include the availability of highly trained oncologists, up-to-the-minute diagnostics, the necessary funding and frameworks in place for research, a holistic approach to cancer care incorporating supportive and palliative care, and a multidisciplinary approach to best manage and treat our patients," continued Taberero.

"ESMO calls for a multi-stakeholder commitment towards ultimately ensuring access to optimal [cancer](#) care for all patients," said Taberero. "Sustainable [cancer care](#) is a key pillar of the ESMO 2020 Vision and we are determined to continue pursuing this goal in collaboration with our partners."

More information: Ronak Saluja et al. Examining Trends in Cost and Clinical Benefit of Novel Anticancer Drugs Over Time, *Journal of Oncology Practice* (2018). [DOI: 10.1200/JOP.17.00058](https://doi.org/10.1200/JOP.17.00058)

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