

What does a member of the parliament expect from cancer control experts?

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Cancer survival still varies widely between European countries (Lancet Oncology 2013). Countries with lowest survival are in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia). Screening, early diagnosis, and accessibility to good care are likely explanations of differences in survival between countries. Better clinical records are needed to assess cancer care and adequate legislation is needed to enable comprehensive clinical records.

According to WHO cancers are globally in increase. One third could be prevented, one third could be cured.

International EU funded collaboration created AGREE, which is an instrument to evaluate clinical guideline development, and set up Guidelines International Network (GIN), and GRADE-collaboration to rate the strength of scientific evidence for clinical guidelines. GRADE-collaborations outcome very closely resembles Finnish Current Care (Käypä hoito) guidelines (independent, evidence-based clinical guidelines). Current care guidelines are in use at nearly every health care unit. In other EU member states, existence and usage of clinical guidelines varies.

What should the group of cancer care experts do? What important problems should they work out?

- Cross-border cancer treatment involves some problems regarding e.g. quality and resources. Promoting cross-border access to treatment would benefit from shared clinical guidelines across Europe
- Resolve how to communicate recommendations to EU member states, how to apply in different populations with different stance toward medical issues
- Manage to implement shared clinical guidelines into clinical practice in different member states
- EU-wide co-operation and concentration of assessment and treatment of for example rare conditions

What does a European patient need the most?

- Fast diagnostic decision making
- Explicit instructions to follow-up
- General knowledge of disease in question
- Information of patients associations
- Discussing psychosocial issues