

## 7<sup>th</sup> Biannual Conference of the Polish Brachytherapy Society – presidential digest

The Polish Brachytherapy Society organizes scientific meetings every two years. There are mainly for Polish nationals to present not only our data and current brachytherapy standards, but also to meet each other and discuss new directions for patient care. We also present educational lectures to keep Polish brachytherapy on the highest possible level.

The year 2020 is one of the weirdest to remember. We all miss regular meetings, congresses, and workshops. Lockdowns, flight cancellations, and the COVID-19 pandemic have changed our habits. These have also influenced our scientific work. The World Brachytherapy Congress has been postponed till 2021, while the GEC-ESTRO workshop has been canceled. Also, the ESTRO meeting has been moved to November and it is going to be held fully online.

Regarding the Conference, we have been changing our decision for weeks. After analyzing the pros and cons, our organizing committee decided to proceed with the Conference. We accepted that no internationals would come, as double quarantine was unimaginable. Moreover, we decided to limit the number of participants and organize a hybrid meeting (i.e., physical plus online) with no interactive workshops.

And WE DID IT! From 15.09.2020 to 17.09.2020, there were over 100 participants physically present. The industry exhibition included 15 pharmaceutical and technology companies (booths were more modest than usual due to social distancing). More than 50 participants streamed sessions online. Forty-three lectures were presented for more than 12 hours. Fourteen presenters showed their original data, twelve displayed their own clinical experience, while 17 provided strictly educational lectures.

One of the most significant highlights was the skin cancer brachytherapy session held in English. Other sessions included prostate cancer brachytherapy, gynecological cancers brachytherapy, or interventional radiotherapy. Participants took part in special conferences on SARS-Cov-2, supportive care, or future of BrachyScience with the *Journal of Contemporary Brachytherapy* Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Adam Chicheł. The memorial session was exceptional and emotional, as we paid respects to the late Prof. Janusz Skowronek and the late Dr. Brygida Białas.

To conclude, not only in my opinion, it was a great time spent with people interested in brachytherapy. Lobby talks brought new friendships and collaborations. We did not receive any reports on COVID-19-positive participants, two weeks after the meeting, because of strict adherence to the procedures, social distancing, face masks, and disinfectants on every corner. This may be helpful for future meetings in the time of pandemic. We should remember: **#wearebrachy**.



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