

This is the annual report from the AROME annual meeting and the General Assembly, which was held in 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 in La Marsa, Tunisia.

After the 1<sup>st</sup> AROME Educational Juniors' Course on locally Advanced Cancers, held from 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> October, with international participation of instructors and an important participation of junior and senior oncologists, a success that is owed to the continuous efforts of Prof Hamouda Boussen and Prof Nouredine Bouaouinna, the General Assembly took place. During more than 4 hours AROME members revisited the most important issues concerning the present and future of the Association in an exciting brainstorming that gave the following conclusions:

### **Membership- Financial report**

**Individual membership (F. Lokiec):** important issues were discussed, such as:

*Who is an AROME member? What will be the procedure to become an AROME member?*

People who wish to become AROME members have to register through the website

*Where is the list of the AROME members? What information should be provided by members and of whom should it be accessible?*

A list of all registered members will be kept by AROME's secretaries; with all their contact information- information about members will be accessible to other members only through a password for the website

*What will be the membership fee, if any?*

A membership fee should exist to assure personal motivation of new members. It should not be expensive; 5€ for members from the southern side of the Mediterranean Area (MA) and 10€ for members coming from the northern side.

*How will the membership fee be paid?*

Membership should be paid to a special bank account through the website.

*What will be the membership advantages?*

Membership will be made available to non-physicians also. Membership advantages will include the possibility to apply for AROME grants, participate in AROME clinical trials and projects and reduced fees for AROME congresses, such as the International Monaco Oncology.

### **Departmental membership (A. Kuten)**

*Should departmental memberships become an opportunity?*

*Who will be responsible for the departmental membership?*

*Who will be responsible for the practical issues (payment, membership advantages etc)?*

Departmental memberships should become possible with a contact person in charge for each department and reduced fees for memberships of the whole department's participants.

Departmental membership's advantages: Departments are registered as AROME partners and enjoy privileges, such as trial participation, reduced fees for their members to AROME educational activities and increased opportunities to host AROME activities.

***Financial report (S. Turkan) positive with 100.000€ (before payment of the fees for La Marsa meeting).***

### **Education**

#### ***Radiobiology course (Nuran Bese)***

Aim: to give a full theoretical and practical aspect of radiobiology importance, clinical relevance and application to young radiation oncologists.

Where: in Istanbul

When: May 27-30 2010 Price: totally free

Collaboration with IAEA

Lecturers: Barry Rosenstein

Martin Pruschy

David Azria

Mahmut Oszahin

Michael Koukourakis

Target population: 4<sup>th</sup> year of residence and young specialists in radiation oncology, radiation physicists

Estimated number of participants: 50

Sponsoring by Varian with delineation on last day (training facility to increase practical education).

#### **Innovation in breast cancer**

Aim: to inform future leaders on "medical management, writing and communicative skills"

Where: not known yet, possibly in Turkey

When: not defined yet

How: possible financing by Astra Zeneca

In charge: A. Taghian, N. Bese

Possible ***course on brachytherapy*** (in charge: S. Turkan) idea theoretical yet

### ***Workshops within congresses (Yazid Belkacemi)***

- Workshop report for 2006 to 2009 (see website)

Meetings, workshops, interventions

### ***1rst IMO (International Monaco Oncology) Congress: AROME Oncology Educational Conference (January 22-23, 2010)***

Aim: An annual or- bi-annual AROME congress with solely

Scientific aims promote oncology in the MA, give the opportunity to non-AROME members to get acquainted to the AROME Association and comprise international, high quality scientific contributions.

Participation: A very low price for AROME members will exist and free registration for junior for the congress but no sponsorship for flight and hotel from AROME funds.

### ***Planned Workshops (end of 2009 and 2010)***

#### **2009**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
□	NoVi Sad Oncology Meeting cancer	Sept, 9-10	Breast
		(Serbia)	
□	Femmes & Cancers Gynecologic	Oct, 7-9	Breast & (France)
□	5th JICC	Oct 13-15	Oncology
		(Constantine, Algeria)	
□	4th AROME Annual Meeting Oncology	Oct, 16-17	
		(Tunisia)	
□	Congrès Oncologie Moyen Orient Oncology	Nov, 5-7	(Lebanon)

#### **2010**

- **1st post SABCS for Northern Africa (AROME) (Morocco)**  
Jan 8th                      **Breast cancer**

Focus on metastatic disease, new drugs, radiotherapy and surgery with SABCS highlights in the morning and open discussion in the afternoon.

Aim: to give a feedback on data who change practical activity and provide the opportunity to people from low income countries to have access to fresh scientific information

Major sponsor by Pfizer and GSK

Repetition each year in different countries

- ❑ **Biennales Monegasques** Jan, 20-23 Oncology  
(Monaco)
- ❑ **International Monaco Oncology** Jan, 22-23  
Oncology  
(Monaco)
- ❑ **10th Panarab Congress** April 30- May 2  
Oncology (Algeria)

### ***Social activities***

Decision to organize a charity Galla to collect donations to AROME in Monaco every 2 years. Collaboration with S. Bataille and IASON on a cultural event for caritative reasons.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Charity Galla in January 2010 in Monte Carlo

### ***Workshops to develop (Yazid Belkacemi)***

Keep "delivering practical education" in mind  
Possibilities to intervene within future national congresses

### ***Juniors' courses (Yoann Pointreau)***

Problem about diffusion of the questionnaire with very few responses. The questionnaire was good and adapted but we need to propose others ways for diffusion.  
Next questionnaire to be sent at the same time as the report. Senior in each country must to diffuse the questionnaire to their juniors. Juniors will send back response (globally or individually) to Yoann Pointreau.

### **C. Grants**

#### ***Paradise Programme (Abraham Kuten)***

**1<sup>st</sup> PAIN CONTROL AND PALLIATIVE CARE IN ONCOLOGY**  
**"PARADISE"** Teaching Course  
for Albanian Team, September 2009  
Rambam Health Care Campus, Haifa, Israel  
Under the auspices of AROME  
*The Albanian team comprised of: One MD- Two nurses- One social worker*

*The Haifa team comprised of: MDs- Nurses- Social workers- Psychologists- Complementary medicine professionals -Spiritual support team*

*Topics included: Principles of palliative care in Oncology, Pain alleviation, Advanced palliative medication, End of life care: symptom management, Palliative radiotherapy, Palliative chemotherapy, Nutrition approach in palliative therapy, The role of the Coordinating Palliative Nurse*

*Clerkships included: Pain alleviation clinic, Supportive care rounds, Palliative team meeting - case studies, Palliative care in Chemotherapy Ward, Palliative care in Radiotherapy Ward, Palliative care in outpatient Day Care Facility, Mind-Body Medicine: Shiatsu, Reiki, music therapy, Psycho-oncology, Introduction to Psycho-Oncology, Psychotherapy interventions in Psycho-Oncology, Mind-Body Medicine: Biofeedback, Mind-Body Medicine: Guided meditation, Spiritual Support, Hospice Care (UK) Vs Day Care (Rambam)*

*There were professional visits: Israel Cancer Association, Tel Aviv*

*Tel - Hashomer Hospice, Tel Aviv*

*Italian hospital of Haifa*

*Hematology/ Bone Marrow Transplantation Department*

*Recommendations from present experience regarding the planning of future courses:*

- Emphasize the importance of comprehensive approach
- Develop AROME guidelines for palliative care/pain evaluation/scoring & management
- Develop guidelines for integrated hospital and community palliative care services
- Use the ESMO model of integrative oncology/palliative care centers of excellence
- Increase awareness of medical professionals and public

## **International collaborations**

### **International collaborations**

#### ***Mediterranean countries(Yazid Belkacemi)***

Emphasis on engaging new members who wish to dedicate themselves to the diffusion of the AROME goals

#### ***Meetings politics of Health(Joseph Gligorov)***

Proposition for expanding and collaborating with other organizations, such as the WHO, the IAEA, the UICC etc. as a very important step

#### **More political congresses or events?**

Need to emphasize that although collaboration with local governments and authorities is desirable, AROME is an apolitical association that should not be involved to political actions and positions. Need to underline our political, ethnical and religious independence and tolerance.

#### **Grants for research development (Yazid Belkacemi)**

##### **□ Grant for AROME Junior**

Sponsor: AROME

Topic: Training in modern techniques of RT

Period of training: 1 year

1st Grant (2008-2009)

Junior: Mnejja Wafaa (Sfax, Tunisia)

Directors: Pr Azria (Montpellier), Pr Daoud (Sfax)

Topic: IMRT in Prostate Cancer

Amount: 8KE+all accommodations in Montpellier, France

Proposition to use the same amount of money and spread it to more grants for a reduced training time of 2 or 3 months.

#### **Research laboratory (*Abdelatif Benider*)**

##### **AROME and MA Universities Lab**

**Tumor banking program / lab project for retrospective studies**

Sponsor: AROME and possibly other partners depending on availability of options

Topic: Oncology translational research and genetics

Direction: Administrative committee

Coordination: Advisory board & Scientific committee

Label: MA universities (South and North sides)

Objectives: To promote research on MA malignancies and investigate genetic particularities of people around the MA with respect to cancer susceptibility

An opportunity to produce masters and PHDs opportunities for young researchers from the southern side of the MA for specific research programs.

Location: Casablanca, Morocco

Inauguration: 2011-2012

#### **Scientific report**

#### **Research around the Mediterranean Area**

## **AROME Protocols (Paula Tsoutsou)**

### **Working parties round tables**

#### **1. *Clinical research projects elaboration***

##### **Questionnaire of research resources sent to all AROME members**

What is essential for a center to participate? : definition of prerequisites for clinical research within AROME: presence of an Ethical Committee

Existence of informed consent

Funding

IRB within a given center

By law

As quality assurance: To form a checklist for every center to fill in that will serve as a workmap for institutions

##### ***What has been done so far ?***

Concerns over project being premature due to lack of proper information availability.

**In charge of the project: L. Negre, F. Lokiec**

#### **2. *Retrospective study of pT3N0M0 breast cancer patients treated with mastectomy and no RT***

Collect all the patients with pT3N0M0 tumors that have not received RT after mastectomy

Stratify them according to prognostic factors

Match control study too difficult ? no

To send a questionnaire to all participating centers to find out possible accrual

Collect patients from 1999-2001 for no impact of aromatase inhibitors or taxanes

**In charge of the project: Nuran Bese**

##### ***What has been done so far ?***

Despite Prof Bese's efforts, project has been theoretical so far and we need to re- evaluate our commitment to realize it → decision to quit the project for the moment

#### **3. *Young oncologists project***

Map of training programs for young oncologists around the Mediterranean Area

Questionnaire to be sent to senior oncologists to accrue juniors: according to juniors' answers detection of demographics of young oncologists

Aim: to develop channels of communication between young oncologists

to build the 1st AROME teaching course for Young Oncologists around the Mediterranean Area during the next AROME meeting

to evaluate the heterogeneity around the Mediterranean area

to focus not on the theoretical syllabus, but on the actual reality of training

to develop a foundation of AROME residents to connect residents with each other

**In charge of the project: *Y. Pointreau and A. Toledano***

***What has been done so far ?***

Questionnaire produced and sent to all AROME members, however poor response has been noted (see also above)

***4. Retrospective collection and re- evaluation of published data on nasopharynx epidemiology and treatment around the Mediterranean area***

Write to AROME members that have published on nasopharynx and collect their data to form an AROME nasopharynx database that will be re- evaluated statistically by us

**In charge of the project: *H. Bousсен, F. Geara***

***What has been done so far ?***

Prof Gear is planning to write to all AROME members asking for data

***5. Retrospective analysis of young women with breast cancer around the Mediterranean Area***

Collect data of women < 35 years old with breast cancer to re- evaluate local recurrence and overall survival rates, with respect to prognostic factors (such as hormone receptor status, HER2 status, etc)

**In charge of the project: *J. Gligorov***

***What has been done so far ?***

***6. Phase II study on nasopharyngeal cancer: PF induction + RT/ anti-EGFR***

**In charge of the project: *S. Billan, M. Oszahin***

***What has been done so far ?***

Protocol has been written and submitted

Sponsorship asked from Merck by the Chairman of the Scientific Committee of AROME

The study, if accepted by Merck, will be a AROME study and will be conducted and sponsored by Rambam Medical Center in Haifa, Israel with the participation of Departments of Radiation Oncology and Medical Oncology of the Cerrahpasa Medical School in Istanbul, Turkey. The principal investigator is *Dr Salem Billan* from Rambam Medical Center.

***7. "A phase II study of definitive radiochemotherapy in combination with bevacizumab in patients with locally advanced uterine cervix squamous cell carcinoma".***

Protocol written and submitted by Chairman of Scientific Committee of AROME to asked the sponsorship of Roche.

### ***What has been done so far ?***

The study, if accepted by Roche, will be a AROME study and will be conducted and sponsored by Rambam Medical Center in Haifa, Israel with the participation of Departments of Radiation Oncology and Medical Oncology of the Cerrahpasa Medical School in Istanbul, Turkey.

The principal investigator was **Dr Zvi Bernstein** from Rambam Medical Center

Currently, since Dr Bernstein left the oncology Dept of Rambam HCC and moved to Kiev, Ukraine, the proposal will be handled from now on by **Dr Liana Abdach** from the same Dept.

### **Publications**

**Books:** (*Micha Barhana*)

**Book in Descriptive Epidemiology and Means around the Mediterranean Area**

Collaboration with UICC not fruitful until now

Grant needed

Issues:

Who will write it on behalf of AROME ?

**Barhana Micha** in charge of the project, will involve a team of students to collect data and write the chapters

Who will publish it?

**Springer** interested in publishing it. Confirmed to Y. Belkacemi

**Funding needed :**

- max €10,000 as a grant for M. Barhana team who will be in charge of the project

Why publish as AROME ?

Literature concerning particularities in oncology around the Mediterranean Area is very limited → there is need for more information: this is one of AROME 's missions

AROME can make itself known through publishing, thus attracting new members and people willing to collaborate in order to accomplish the **AROME mission**

Background

Data on cancer risk factors in Mediterranean population is lacking. Data on Cancer incidence is partially available and will be fully presented soon. Knowledge of risk factors serves both for planning preventive and health promotion activities as well as in Ecological research. Ecological research is the preferred method to explore possible relationships between causes and effects in both ways (risk and protective factors)

It is therefore proposed

To write a publication (book) on cancer- oriented activities in the Mediterranean Area that focuses on:

*Cancer Control*

*Cancer Prevention &*

*Screening*

Topic	Includes	Main sources
Description of Mediterranean Area (MA)	Geography, economics, standard of living etc.	World bank, OECD, EU
Cancer burden	Brief description, no complexed tables; list of major diseases - rates and number	cancer in 5 continents, websites of registries, published papers
Risk factors control & cancer prevention activities	Tobacco use	national strategies, legislations; regional or local activities published papers, WHO, EU, OECD
	Obesity	
	Physical activity	
	Nutrition, including Alcohol	
	Occupation (?)	
	HPV vaccine	
	Other infections	
Awareness programs & cancer screening activities	Environmental monitoring, pollution	Mass media, education
	National cancer control programs	
	Tobacco - use prevention & cessation activities	
Health system (cancer wise)	Health expenditure	Health workers
	Health workers	
	Accessibility to medical care	

#### Data sources

We will use existing data from organizations (WHO, World bank, NOG's), Published literature and official governmental published data.

We will adjust and standardized data where needed. Incidence data will be from official sources (cancer registries, IARC).

An attempt will be made to correlate risk behaviour and outcomes (depends on the available data, with special regard on timelines to consider latency period). Timelines & Costs

Gathering the data

Formatting and adjusting

Writing

Checking & proof editing

4 months (March 2010)

2 months (May 2010)

2 months (August 2010)

1 month (September 2010)

Estimated cost: Euro 10,000 (Student's effort & data) Collaborators

Micha Barchana

MPH Student (s)

Nabiel Mikhail (biostatitician 'om Assiute, Egypt) -

has to confirm

Others ..... ??

**Papers published:** (*Paula Tsoutsou*)

## ***AROME guidelines paper (Joseph Gligorov, Paula Tsoutsou)***

Drafts already prepared

Yazid Belkacemi, Nuran Bese, Fadi Geara, Joseph Gligorov, Paula Tsoutsou in charge

Re-evaluation of the draft and urgent submission for publishing → done

Issues:

Decided to write two papers out of the existing draft:

First: a technical paper describing the tables, with a brief introduction and discussion and a good description of the methodology and results (tables) → draft has been reevaluated by Y. Belkacemi, A. Kuten, N. Bese, J. Gligorov and P. Tsoutsou

Second: a "philosophy" paper discussing the main points of introduction and discussion → are we willing to submit it as a perspective paper/ editorial etc ?

First paper will probably be submitted to Crit Rev Hematol Oncol, second to a Perspective part of a general oncology journal

Aims and scope of the AROME guidelines:

To ensure evidence- based quality of care in the Mediterranean area

To overcome disparities between Mediterranean countries with variable incomes and health resources

To critically review data in order to establish acceptable practice recommendations for optimal care under various circumstances

To promote interdisciplinary communication and collaboration between oncologists as most cost effective strategy

Methodology

Establishment of minimum acceptable requirements vs standard of care

Minimum acceptable requirements: the minimum practice an oncologist should be able to perform in order to provide *acceptable* care

Standard of care: the standard practice an oncologist should perform in order to provide *optimum* care with respect to

Diagnosis

Staging

Treatment

Follow-up

Structure

***Introduction*** highlighting the need for the development of another set of guidelines

***Materials and Methods*** describing the way we worked in Istanbul

***Results*** presenting our guidelines in the form of tables

***Discussion*** highlighting the main points of each disease site guidelines and discussing the perspectives of working with such a tool

**Papers under publication :** *(Joseph Gligorov, Paula Tsoutsou)*

**Proposals for publications:** *(Hamouda Boussen)*

**AROME Journal:** *(Yazid Belkacemi)*

Decision to publish the Annals or Archives of Radiotherapy and Oncology in the Mediterranean Area Journal, official Journal of the AROME society, 4 times annually in order to give voice to the special interests in oncology around the Mediterranean Area. The Journal will publish original research, reviews and all kinds of scientific contributions on oncology with a special interest in the area. An fully detailed agenda has already been written and submitted to a publishing house.

**Rare cancers:** *(Yazid Belkacemi)*

**Internet- Next AROME meeting**

**Website** *(Francois Lokiec, Yoann Pointreau, Myroslav Lustyk)*

Need to renovate and re-structure the official AROME website. Need to involve professional website development, since it is a substantial tool for AROME concerning:

- membership (registration, advantages, database)
- educational activities
- grant diffusion and promotion
- research opportunities

Since the website is the first contact any professional has with AROME it is crucial that it becomes: well built, concrete, practical and regularly updated.

**Next AROME meeting** *(all)*

Theme of the meeting

Practical issues

Where? **Montpellier**

When? **Last weekend of September 2010**