

Brussels, January 6, 2006

Dear Colleagues,

In the very first place, a very fruitful 2006 for all of you, on behalf of the PROCARE Workgroup.

2005 ended with some very rewarding news. Indeed, the project has obtained financial support from the Foundation against Cancer. Also, we were informed that the project would most probably receive financial support from the Authorities. We are obviously grateful for the appreciation for the project shown by this endorsement, but we are especially excited by the opportunity offered to the medical and surgical profession to launch a national quality improvement program within the framework of our scientific and professional associations. It will now be up to us to show that we deserve that trust!

Therefore this opportunity is taken to remind you the principles of the PROCARE project.

- PROCARE is a **multidisciplinary project** aimed at improving the **quality of care** in rectal cancer and reducing variability in outcome through the **implementation of guidelines** and **continuous registration** with confidential feedback to the participating centres.
- **Participation in the project is completely voluntary** and it will **not lead to any form of certification** or any limitation in the opportunity to treat rectal cancer, whether based on the number of cases treated, adherence to the national Guidelines, any form of credentialing or participation in PROCARE.
- All participating centres and physicians will receive **a confidential feedback** on their performance and will be **offered the possibility of educational support** if they deem it useful. They will be able to choose freely whether they need support as well as on the type of support they opt for. This will be worked out and announced separately by the various scientific and professional organizations involved.
- **Registration of all rectal cancers treated by the participating centers is essential.** It is the backbone of the project. In fact a vast majority of the participants at the May and June workshops considered participating in the registry as the only condition to participate in PROCARE. This stance was endorsed by the PROCARE Workgroup.

**In a 2005 questionnaire more than 80 % of the Belgian hospitals expressed their willingness to participate in the project.** With a positive perspective on the necessary financial support, the project can therefore be launched as foreseen on January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2006.

- The Belgian Guidelines on the treatment of rectal cancer (i.e. located at 15 cm or less from the anal margin) are published and available for download (Acrobat format) on the websites of the various participating Societies.
- The Registry Form is attached to this newsletter. All centers willing to participate are asked to fill in the registry form for all rectal cancers treated from January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 on. The forms have to be filled in on a print-out or electronically on the .doc document and sent by mail to the Belgian Cancer Registry, Koningsstraat 215, 1210 Brussel (on CD-Rom if electronically). This mailing can be done on a case – by – case or on a monthly base.  
Please note that for the surgeons registration started on October the 1<sup>st</sup> in view of the selection of the candidate TME- trainers and that digitalization of the data for analysis is ongoing for them. This is open to all surgeons. If you are willing to act as a TME-trainer please send in your forms as soon as they are ready (see Newsletter BSCRS – PROCARE August 2005).
- A web based registration will be set up in the course of 2006.
- Please note that in the coming months you may be contacted by a PROCARE data manager from the Belgian Cancer Registry to give you further support in filling in the registry forms.

If you have further questions please contact **one of the members of the PROCARE working group (cf. list of their e-mail addresses).**

Various members of the PROCARE working group are also very much willing to give additional information on any and all aspects of the project at your LOK – GLEM. Do not hesitate to let us know.

With very kind regards,

On behalf of the PROCARE working group  
Prof. Dr. Freddy Penninckx, Chairman

On behalf of the BSCRS (Belgian Section of Colorectal Surgery)  
Dr. D. De Coninck, president

On behalf of the BSPathology (Digestive Pathology Club)  
Prof. Dr. N. Ectors  
Dr. A. Jouret

On behalf of the BSRadiotherapy-Oncology  
Prof. Dr. K. Haustermans  
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