

OPENING CEREMONIES/KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
MASCC/ISOO 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM  
SUPPORTIVE CARE IN CANCER  
ST. GALLEN, SWITZERLAND

Professor Hans-Jorg Senn, Co-Chair, on behalf of himself and Co-Chair Dr. Agnes Glaus welcomed attendees at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary International Symposium to St. Gallen for the annual meeting, Supportive Care in Cancer. He introduced Rudolf Lutz, head of the St. Gallen Chamber Group Orchestra, who then gave a musical welcome.

Professor Senn noted that this is a special symposium with world-class leaders in supportive care. Twenty years ago he and Dr. Glaus, with others, realized the need to focus on quality of life of cancer patients with the clinical science behind practice. This conference represents a window of hope for relieving suffering through motivation for excellent supportive care.

Dr. Glaus welcomed those attending. Her remarks:

“Dear Mrs Hanselmann, Minister of Health  
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Guests, colleges and friends.

On behalf of the Multinational Society of Supportive Care in Cancer, the International Society of Oral Oncology and on behalf of St. Gallen Oncology Conferences as well as in the name of my symposium co-chair, Hansjörg Senn and the local organising committee,  
It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium on Supportive Care in Cancer!

Being myself a native from the St. Gallen region, I welcome you with a warm Swiss “Gruetzi mitenand”. A word which you hopefully will exercise a couple of times in the next days.

This Symposium is a very special event because it gathers longstanding representatives and world famous individuals from the field of Supportive Care. Many experts and senior professionals are here to explore better ways to support patients and their families on their cancer journey.

This anniversary Symposium gathers people from the very first generation of Supportive Care – and some of us indeed have become Supportive Care grandparents and we are happy to see that the ideas and visions of Supportive Care continue to grow and evolve over decades. We are pleased to also welcome novices and a new generation of supportive care clinicians.  
By the way – these bears do not live in St. Gallen but the city of St. Gallen has a bear in the city flag.

The first Symposium under the title Supportive Care in Cancer has taken place 20 years ago, exactly here in this place! The idea was born in the practice field where nurses and physicians realised that cure of cancer became increasingly realistic for more patients – but not for all. In decades of discoveries we had learned to destroy cancer cells, but we also realised that we had to learn to focus on quality of life – and that most patients could profit from a clinical science that was devoted to the support of quality of life.  
During a cancer journey, patients and their caregivers go through different stages of disease and need specific help at different times in order to reach a destination – or a goal.

Sometimes this journey is dangerous, scaring and challenging and support- pillars help to be safe and strong – whatever the destination of the journey is. What a chance for patients to be cared for by skilled companions and skilled engine drivers. The journey for MASCC and its mission continues.

We are proud to have the opportunity to chair this 2007 meeting here again today, with the same idea behind – but with new possibilities coming from a multitude of caring disciplines. We felt that it was timely, to see Supportive Care as an evolving strategy, embracing supportive care measures during curative **and** palliative but also in cancer preventive phases. This is a new aspect in this type of meetings and this year is reflected in some topics devoted to prevention and survivorship issues.

We are happy to welcome over 700 nurses, physicians, dentists, psychologists and other health care professionals here in St. Gallen. Participants of this symposium do represent 52 countries from all over the world and many cultures. Participants also come from a variety of disciplines. We believe that interdisciplinary teamwork is a specialty within Supportive Care and this can make cancer care more “holistic” to provide help for individual needs.

MASCC has also invited and supported professionals from lesser-served countries to take part in this symposium. This is truly a way to **develop a culture of supportive care worldwide**. Together with Georg Elliot we want to say “What are we living for, if not to make life easier for each other”.

This conference represents a window to suffering, but also a window to relieving. This should make life easier, for those who care but also for patients and their families.

Together with the MASCC /ISOO board we have given our best to compose an excellent scientific program. It is our great wish that it will represent a good learning experience and evoke new motivation and energy to strive for excellence. We also hope that you will find some time to support yourself and that you will enjoy the cultural and geographical highlights of our city and the region.

Be very welcome to this anniversary Symposium, celebrate with us and enjoy your stay in St. Gallen! “

Professor Senn then introduced Ms. Heidi Hanselmann, Minister of Health for the region of St. Gallen, who welcomed all, gave a history of St. Gallen, and reminded everyone of the benefit of St. Gallen chocolate.

Dr. Paul Hesketh, President of the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer, welcomed all on behalf of the board. He gave particular thanks to Board Members, the Symposium Chairs, and the financial supporters of the meeting. He invited all non-members to join MASCC.

The ceremonies concluded with a final musical presentation from Rudolf Lutz.

Professor Senn introduced Dr. Frederich Stiefel, a psychooncologist and Head of Psychiatry at the University Hospital Lausanne who's Keynote Lecture was entitled “Support of the Supporters”. Highlights from Dr. Stiefel's remarks:

Approximately 30% of medical oncologists report psychological morbidity with high levels of exhaustion. Stress arises from external factors as heavy workloads, unpredictable work schedules, administrative duties, and exposure to suffering and death. Some tolerate stress better to others. Six recommendations for handling internal stressors include:

1. Recognize your own emotions. The more aware the professional is of his/her emotions, the less emotion driven is the relationship with the patients. Welcome emotions to the patient.
2. Reflect on your own limits. Be aware of and accept own limits
3. Recognize the oscillation between ego and ego-ideals (a double-edged sword). Not every feeling toward a patient is empathy. If the professional becomes too close, identification occurs and the relationship is no longer helpful.
4. If you undergo intense feelings, look for the origins. Early development and life experiences in the past shape the present

5. Reflect on your career choice. Be aware of conflicting identities; remember the patient is the one with the disease.

6. Be aware that switching identities can be a difficult task

Dr. Stiefel closed by stressing the important and protective role of hierarchy. Values, framework, authority, autonomy, clarity, good & respectful relationships, intellectual stimulation and variety, recognition and support arise from hierarchy.

Finally, Dr. Stiefel dedicated his new book to his mentor, Professor Hans Jorg Senn.