Global Forum of Cancer Surgeons: A Steady Voice for Cancer Surgeons to Improve Surgical Care for Cancer Patients Globally

Chandrakanth Are, MD, MBA, FRCS, FACS¹, Kelly M. McMasters, MD, PhD¹, Armando Giuliano, MD, FACS, FRCSEd¹, Charles Balch, MD, FACS, FASCO¹, Benjamin O. Anderson, MD, FACS¹, Russell Berman, MD, FACS¹, Riccardo Audisio, MD, FRCS, PhD², Tibor Kovacs, PhD, FRCS, FEBS², Dhairyasheel Savant, MBBS, MS, FICS³, Rajendra Toprani, MBBS, MS, Mch³, Gamal Amira, MD, FACS, FEBS⁴, Ibrahim Sallam, MSc, PhD⁴, Jeong Heum Baek, MD, PhD⁵, Moo-Jun Baek, MD⁵, Do Joong Park, MD, PhD⁵, Gregorio Quintero Beulo, MD⁶, Enrique Bargallo Rocha, MD^{6,7}, Hector Martinez Said, MD^{6,7}, Muhammad Cheema, MBBS, FCPS⁸, Abul Ali Khan, FRCS, MBBS⁸, Lloyd Mack, MD, FRCSC, FACS⁹, Gong Chen, MD, PhD¹⁰, Claudio Almeida Quadros, MD^{7,11}, Tarcisio Reis, MD, PhD^{7,11}, Heber Salvador de Castro Ribeiro, MD^{7,11}, Douglas Zippel, MD¹², and Augusto Leon Ramirez, MD¹³

¹Society of Surgical Oncology, Rosemont, IL; ²European Society of Surgical Oncology, Brussels, Belgium; ³Indian Association of Surgical Oncology, Ahmedabad, India; ⁴Egyptian Society of Surgical Oncology, Cairo, Egypt; ⁵Korean Society of Surgical Oncology, Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea; ⁶Sociedad Mexicana de Oncologia, Mexico City, Mexico; ⁷Latin America Society of Surgical Oncology, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; ⁸Pakistan Society of Surgical Oncology, Lahore, Pakistan; ⁹Canadian Society of Surgical Oncology, Toronto, ON, Canada; ¹⁰Chinese Society of Clinical Oncology, Beijing, China; ¹¹Brazilian Society of Surgical Oncology, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; ¹²Israeli Society of Surgical Oncology, Ramat Gan, Israel; ¹³Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Santiago, Chile

The Global Forum of Cancer Surgeons (GFCS) was formed under the auspices of the Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO) at its Annual Cancer Symposium in Seattle, Washington in March 2017.¹ The GFCS consists of surgical oncology leaders from various surgical oncology organizations across the world, some of which have Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) agreements with SSO.

The GFCS aims to work with global cancer advocacy groups and organizations, including the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), to address the lack of surgical leadership by promoting greater involvement of cancer surgeons. Such involvement can help to raise and address issues specific to surgical care for cancer patients, which historically has been less than adequate. It is hoped that

through the efforts of the GFCS, we can address the inequities in surgical care for cancer patients on the global stage.

The GFCS planned to meet every year at the SSO Annual Cancer Symposiums. The second annual meeting of the GFCS took place 22 March 2018 at the SSO Annual Cancer Symposium in Chicago, Illinois. Surgical oncology leaders from 12 countries/regions representing diverse parts of the world attended the meeting. The 12 countries/regions included Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, European Union, India, Israel, Mexico, Pakistan, South Korea, and the United States of America.

The second annual meeting of the GFCS was a productive session (Fig. 1). We noted an increase in participation compared with the first meeting in Seattle, Washington. The following four new countries joined the forum: Chile, China, Egypt, and Israel. In addition, the SSO has received notes of interest from other countries desiring to join the GFCS so it can speak as one cohesive voice for all cancer surgeons globally.

It is interesting to note that the cancer burden from the countries represented in the GFCS meeting in Chicago accounted for the majority of the global cancer burden²

FIG. 1 Global forum of cancer surgeons, March 2018. *Top row from left to right:* Heber Salvador de Castro Ribeiro, Lloyd Mack, Tarcisio Reis, Benjamin O. Anderson, Douglas Zippel, Chandrakanth Are, Kelly M. McMasters, Charles Balch, Ibrahim Sallam, Riccardo Audisio, Gregorio Quintero Beulo, Tibor Kovacs, Hector Martinez

Said, Abul AliKhan. Seated from left to right: Claudio Quadros, Rajendra Toprani, Gamal Amira, Moo-Jun Baek, Do Joong Park, Jeong Heum Baek, Muhammad Cheema, Gong Chen, Augusto Leon Ramirez, Enrique Bargallo Rocha

(Fig. 2). The burden of new cancer cases from the GFCS countries accounts for nearly 77.5% of the global burden of the new cancer cases. Similarly, the GFCS countries account for nearly 75.7% of the global cancer-related mortality.

The successful meeting suggests that the GFCS is here to stay and likely to grow in size and representation in the future. More importantly, the volume of the global cancer

burden represented highlights the fact that the GFCS can be a powerful voice for cancer surgeons to help improve surgical care for cancer patients globally.

As a result of the successful meeting in Chicago, several administrative measures have been undertaken by the SSO to ensure the continued success of the GFCS. The primary measure is to ensure that GFCS speaks as one voice for all cancer surgeons to guarantee the most cohesive, viable, and

FIG. 2 Share of GFCS regions cancer burden compared to world burden.

vital representation on the global stage. A mission statement has been created, which states: “The mission of the Global Forum of Cancer Surgeons is to provide a voice for cancer surgeons to improve surgical care for cancer patients through clinical care, education, research, outreach, advocacy, and leadership on the global stage”.

Some other measures instituted to ensure the smooth functioning of the GFCS are the following:

1. A website has been created to host the GFCS, which can be accessed at the following Web link: <http://www.surgonc.org/global-outreach/global-forum-of-cancer-surgeons>.
2. All communications relating to the GFCS should be addressed to the following email address: GFCS@surgonc.org.
3. GFCS will meet annually at the SSO Annual Cancer Symposia. Additional virtual meetings are in the planning phase for 2018 and will be communicated to the representatives.

At the second annual meeting of the GFCS in Chicago, discussions were held regarding barriers to surgical care for cancer patients across the world. A survey was previously distributed to the members of GFCS to identify barriers to surgical care for cancer patients in the arenas of clinical care, education, research, and workforce. The results of the

survey were presented and served as the backdrop for discussions to identify solutions addressing the barriers. The findings of this survey will soon be published in the *Annals of Surgical Oncology*. It is hoped that future sessions of the GFCS will continue not only to address important topics such as this but also to drive efforts to develop tangible, realistic, and meaningful solutions that can be implemented with good outcomes.

The Society of Surgical Oncology sincerely thanks the leaders from various parts of the world for participating in this forum and look forward to their continued participation in the third annual meeting of the GFCS at the SSO Annual Cancer Symposium in San Diego, California 27–30 March, 2019. It is the hope of every oncologist to ensure that all patients receive timely, safe, high-quality surgical care regardless of their geographic location or socioeconomic standing. The Global Forum of Cancer Surgeons can play a vital role in reaching that laudable goal.

REFERENCES

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