

Introduction

Controversies in Breast Cancer 2009

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This supplement represents the proceedings of Controversies in Breast Cancer held in Edinburgh, 7 to 8 September 2009. This meeting was the fourth in what has now become a series of meetings. Although many of the subjects and faculty members were different from those in previous meetings, the objectives and format were similar to those held before. Essentially a faculty of recognised international experts had assembled to debate controversial issues with a common theme relating to the natural history and treatment of breast cancer.

The role of the faculty experts was to bullet-point the issues that made the topics worthy of debate – whether this was a lack of consensus on the issue, apparently paradoxical results or a simple lack of information. The faculty's responsibility was accordingly to highlight different facets of an argument, to explain the paradox and to identify the obstacle to progress and to be contentious. The delegates' responsibilities were to question and challenge. In so far as these remits are rather limited, this may be reflected in the individual contributions to the volume that are not intended to be comprehensive or definitive. Instead, their purpose is to be provocative, to provide different perspectives and to encourage the reader to think.

This year's topics and faculty were developed by the Chairs, who have provided a general background and a synopsis by way of introductions to the sessions. The topics included Risk Factors, Tailored Targeted Therapy for All – A Realistic and Worthwhile Objective, The Potential of New Technologies/ Approaches, Who Would Have Thought It! and Are Current Drug Development Programmes Realising the Full Potential of New Agents?

As a final comment, it should be noted that these proceedings do not reflect absolutely the activities of Controversies 2009. There was a large amount of debate that was not recorded and is not represented within the text. Despite this, it is hoped that this volume will induce informed thought and as a consequence lead to a better under-

standing of some controversies relating to breast cancer in 2009.

Thanks and appreciation given to all participants.

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

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