



CONFERENCES

Interview with the ESTRO 2024 young track chairs, Morten Horsholt Kristensen and Bartek Tomasik

- **Fostering the development of young professionals is a priority for ESTRO. How does the young track address the educational and professional needs of early-career radiation oncologists?**
 - Morten Horsholt Kristensen (MHK): The young track at ESTRO 2024 on May 6 has been planned based on the aim of bridging the gap - the knowledge gap between experienced professionals and young professionals. The idea is to build a bridge between research and clinical application; to pave the way for innovative initiatives in the national radiation oncology societies, and to close the gap regarding inequalities in radiation oncology. Also, the aim is to remind participants of what shouldn't be forgotten from the history books of radiation oncology.
 - Bartek Tomasik (BT): The young track also supports the young ESTRO (yESTRO) mentoring programme, which pairs early-career professionals with experienced mentors who can offer personalised guidance. Following the success of the last two editions, the yESTRO mentoring programme will continue with a third edition that will start at ESTRO 2024 in Glasgow – you can still apply here!
- **In what ways does the young track contribute to building a supportive community for young professionals in radiation oncology, and how can this support extend beyond the congress?**
 - MHK: The yESTRO dinner will take place on the evening before the young track (Sunday 5 May). For the last couple of years, this event has built bonds between young professionals through talk, dinner, dance and discussion in a warm, open atmosphere across countries and professions. Then, during the young track, a speed-dating session is planned. It is quite amazing how much knowledge, inspiration, frustration, wonder and excitement can arise from a two-to-five-minute talk with a complete stranger – it is the stepping stone to a coffee meeting in the Exhibition Hall the following day.
 - BT: One of the yESTRO key initiatives that we're excited about is the opinion panel. This panel is active throughout the year and we will promote it during the young track. It enables young professionals to contribute their perspectives directly on important topics in radiation oncology. It's a platform from where their voices can be heard and can influence the direction of our field. By engaging in these discussions, attendees not only connect with peers but also have a tangible impact on ESTRO's policies and initiatives. It's about empowering our young professionals to be active participants in shaping the future of radiation oncology.
- **How does the young track align with the broader goals of ESTRO in terms of advancing the field of radiation oncology and promoting optimal health for all?**
 - MHK: We hope that the multidisciplinary focus on inequalities and inclusivity in the morning session will inspire young professionals in their roles when they return from the conference.

- BT: The young track's focus on inclusive healthcare mirrors ESTRO's vision. We have prepared a programme that mixes speakers from diverse backgrounds. Such sessions underscore our commitment to global health equity, which is a core component of ESTRO's mission.
- **Are there specific sessions or initiatives within the young track that you believe will be particularly beneficial for early-career professionals, and why?**
 - MHK: If you are just a bit in doubt about how hypofractionation works, from any angle, attend the 13.10 session! If you need inspiration from the great achievements of ESTRO research in past centuries, attend the "Imagine there's no ESTRO" session. But generally, the entire programme is built on the idea of enlightenment, inspiration and mingling. So what's not to like?! If you can wake up early (after the yESTRO dinner the night before), grab a seat in the front row with a cup of coffee, lean back, and enjoy a day at ESTRO with us!
 - BT: Networking is crucial for early-career professionals, and the young track offers unique opportunities for this. Our speed-dating session is a standout feature, as it catalyses quick, dynamic interactions with a wide range of professionals. It's an efficient and engaging way to build connections. Additionally, the yESTRO dinner is not just about enjoying a meal together. It's an informal setting in which attendees can form lasting professional relationships and friendships. These networking events are invaluable for early-career professionals looking to establish strong footholds in the radiation oncology community.
- **What do you think makes the young track so special?**
 - MHK: It is the only place at ESTRO where you are invited to interact actively with the other attendees. It has funny and inspirational sessions as well as lectures and discussions - so a good mixture of social, interactive and professional periods. You may get to know similarly-minded participants for good.
 - BT: What sets the young track apart is its format, which blends education with interaction. This interactive approach, combined with the social and professional networking opportunities, creates a unique and holistic experience for attendees.



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