



SCHOOL

Foundations of Leadership in Radiation Oncology Course

ESTRO 38, Milan, 26 April 2019

I was pleased to be accepted to attend the 'Foundations in Leadership' Course at the most recent ESTRO meeting. As I am from New Zealand it was valuable to attend the course and the main ESTRO meeting during one trip. This more than made up for the long flight to Europe.

The course was recommended to me by colleagues at my workplace, who told me of their positive experiences, but importantly I had observed the demonstrable application of the learning gained by previous attendees in my workplace to make our clinic better.

The course requires a commitment to pre-reading, and follow-up questionnaires prepare you for the content of the curriculum. This is all seamlessly communicated via email.

Prior to attending ESTRO 38, the course participants were welcomed to a live WebEx that not only described course content but also provided the platform to 'meet' your tutors. Given that attendees were from both hemispheres of the globe, I was grateful to be able to participate in a WebEx either in the morning or evening of my local time.

The course convenors were particularly engaging and support was always readily accessible; you sensed this even before you met them.

The course provides practical reading by way of published studies, but also offers interesting and real scenarios that leaders and teams are faced with.

Upon arrival at ESTRO 38, all the attendees were put into teams during the educational sessions, but following some tasks and discussion, the teams were then mixed to provide new contributors and differences of opinion, which was reflective of real life.

Among the talks and tutorials, teams were tasked with hypothetical scenarios. The purpose of this was to encourage engagement and discussion. Teams were challenged to deliver and present to the wider group; this enabled all fledgling leaders to contribute but also to be made aware of their own leadership style and how their actions could be interpreted.

Much like the attendees, the tutors were from all over the world; they appreciated and understood how workplaces and international healthcare models differ, and they acknowledged that individuals and professional teams vary. The course is geared towards embracing these differences and encouraging critical thinking to influence and leverage outcomes based not only on evidence but also on respect for the teams we work in.

The 'Foundations in Leadership' course convenors discussed the curriculum in detail and also invited guest speakers to talk with us. These individuals held positions of authority but showed a willingness to share the successes and failures of their experiences, which was very humbling.

Attending an ESTRO meeting has been a career goal for me, and the opportunity to attend this course gave me the chance to gain a little bit more from the meeting. I was to find, however, that the course was the highlight of my ESTRO experience for all the reasons above. As well as the experiences I enjoyed while in Europe, I gained the knowledge that there was a network of incredibly professional people in the wider community who would be willing to discuss, workshop and advise me in the future.



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