

Prof. Michael Gnant: escalation and de-escalation of primary breast cancer treatment

Received: 02 December 2017; Accepted: 19 December 2017; Published: 11 January 2018.

doi: 10.21037/abs.2017.12.04

View this article at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/abs.2017.12.04>

The 12th Shanghai International Breast Cancer Symposium (SIBCS) was successfully held with wide-range scientific content and different categories during October 19–21, 2017. Organized by Chinese Anti-Cancer Association, Committee of Breast Cancer Society (CACA-CBCS), Fudan University Shanghai Cancer Center and Shanghai Anticancer Association, the meeting featured with diversified categories and wide range of topics. Meanwhile, the emerging journal *Annals of Breast Surgery* was formally presented during the meeting and with great honor, the editorial office took the chance to interview some key-note speakers.

Dr. Michael Gnant, Full Professor of Surgery and Director of the Department of Surgery at the Medical University of Vienna, Austria gave a wonderful speech on “the St. Gallen International Expert Consensus on the Primary Therapy of Early Breast Cancer 2017” (*Figure 1*). Dr. Gnant is co-chairing the renowned St Gallen Consensus Panel for Early Breast Cancer since 2015. The St. Gallen Consensus Conference 2017 on early breast cancer treatment standards took place in Vienna, Austria from March 15–18. This year there are several significant changes. The St. Gallen consensus conference’s main theme was ‘Escalating and Deescalating Treatment’, which is to identify areas where optimal care may be achieved with ‘less’ or ‘more’ treatment. We are pleased to have Dr. Gnant further share changes of the updated consensus and his perspectives towards the heated-talked topics (*Figure 2*).

As a surgeon, Dr. Gnant said that surgery was important as patients could not be cured without surgery. Basically every patient with early breast cancer will have breast surgery. What surgeon is doing is not to cutting out the tumor, but also to achieve cosmetic results for the patients.

To know the generation of knowledge, the progress of science, and eventually benefits to the patients. For a young researcher, it may take decades from the start of the trial to the results. Thus Prof. Gnant suggested the young surgeon engaging more in translational projects and learning how clinical trials work, exchanging opinions with other colleagues and within the country or internationally.



Figure 1 Dr. Michael Gnant is giving the speech.



Figure 2 Dr. Michael Gnant and the Editor.

Undoubtedly, Prof. Gnant is a great surgeon while his initial dream was to be a physician. During his study, he detected that it’s something special in using hands and being a doctor. It’s a mixture of doing something technically but very directly. It’s a particular fascination for him to have the opportunity to view the person who trust you as a whole person.

Let’s enjoy the video (*Figure 3*).



Figure 3 Prof. Michael Gnant: escalation and de-escalation of primary breast cancer treatment (1).

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Interview questions

- (I) As Chairperson of the St. Gallen Consensus Conference on early breast cancer treatment in 2015 and 2017, can you briefly introduce the major change in 2017?
- (II) Could you talk a bit more about the Consensus on early breast cancer treatment, especially in surgery?
- (III) What role does surgery play in the treatment of early breast cancer?
- (IV) We learn that you have served as PIs for decades of national and international prospective randomized clinical trials. What's your suggestion to young participants?
- (V) What sort of ongoing projects do you have in this area?
- (VI) As Director of Department of Surgery, Medical University of Vienna, would you mind sharing the training way of surgeons in your department?
- (VII) What do you love about surgery?

Expert's introduction

Dr Michael Gnant is Full Professor of Surgery and Director of the Department of Surgery at the Medical University of Vienna, Austria, where he also heads the Department of General and Visceral Surgery, and serves as President of the Austrian Breast & Colorectal Cancer Study Group. He is co-chairing the renowned St Gallen Consensus Panel for Early Breast Cancer since 2015.

Dr Gnant graduated in medicine in Vienna (1988) and

subsequently specialized in surgery (1994) and surgical oncology. He also worked as a Visiting Scientist at the National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, USA (1997–1999).

Dr Gnant's research interests include several fields of surgical oncology, in particular breast and pancreatic cancer, immunotherapy, bone-targeted treatment for tumour micrometastases, and pathway-directed therapies such as mTOR and CDK4/6 inhibition, and he has been the Principal Investigator of over 30 clinical trials in these fields. The author of more than 400 original peer-reviewed papers with an impact factor of 2.800 and an H-index of 55, Dr Gnant has presented over 1,000 lectures at national and international meetings. He is the recipient of multiple awards including the prestigious Claudia von Schilling Prize from the Medical University of Hannover, and a corresponding member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Acknowledgments

Funding: None.

Footnote

Provenance and Peer Review: This article was commissioned by the editorial office, *Annals of Breast Surgery*. This article did not undergo external peer review.

Conflicts of Interest: The author has completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/abs.2017.12.04>). MJW reports that she is a full-time employee of AME Publishing Company (publisher of the journal).

Ethical Statement: The author is accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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(Senior Editor: Molly J. Wang, ABS, abs@amegroups.com)

doi: 10.21037/abs.2017.12.04

Cite this article as: Wang MJ. Prof. Michael Gnant: escalation and de-escalation of primary breast cancer treatment. *Ann Breast Surg* 2018;2:1.