

Press Release



Press & Public Relations
Office, Promotion and
Development Sector

Telephone: 22894304

Email: prinfo@ucy.ac.cy

Website: www.ucy.ac.cy/pr



24 October 2019

The University of Cyprus takes initiatives for supporting breast cancer patients

University of Cyprus
The Breast Center of Cyprus
Creating an avatar-based platform to serve
MBC patients across the country



The University of Cyprus is proud to announce that in October – International Breast Cancer Awareness and Prevention Month – it has been selected to receive grant funding in the framework of an international program with the aim of catering for the needs of women with

metastatic breast cancer in Cyprus. Through the Seeding Progress and Resources for the Cancer Community: Metastatic Breast Cancer Challenge (SPARC MBC Challenge), the University of Cyprus will receive up to USD \$25,000 alongside training, mentoring and the opportunity to attend key international cancer events to exchange best practices with other organizations from around the world.

Launched in 2015 by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) in partnership with Pfizer Oncology, the SPARC MBC Challenge is a global grants initiative, which supports projects worldwide aiming to address metastatic breast cancer (MBC) patients' specific needs and ultimately reduce the number of women diagnosed at an advanced stage of breast cancer locally. Through its three editions, the SPARC MBC Challenge has directly benefited more than 14,000 MBC patients globally and has reached more than 140,000 people through information campaigns.

“At UICC, we are very proud to have supported the work of more than 50 organizations from five continents so they can improve the life of people living with MBC in their communities. Particularly in low- and middle-income countries, breast cancer presents too often at a late stage whilst we know that early detection is instrumental to ensure the best possible outcomes. Through this new round of the SPARC MBC Challenge program, more people will be aware of the disease, encouraged to seek help earlier, and hopefully feel more supported than ever”, said the President of UICC, HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan.

UICC International Award for the innovative proposal by the Department of Psychology and the Medical School – Project: “Guiding metastatic breast cancer women after diagnosis: an avatar-based platform”

In Cyprus, 14 people died from breast cancer in 2018. The main challenge for MBC patients in the country is to ensure that the responsible official bodies and service providers will enable policy-making, and effective support to meet patients’ needs.

Innovative ideas aiming to promote, and provide solutions and support for women with MBC dealing with intricate challenges, receive funding for the first time at an international level.

The innovative project titled “Guiding metastatic breast cancer women after diagnosis: an avatar-based platform” by the University of Cyprus Department of Psychology has been selected for the SPARC MBC Challenge award, to develop a novel avatar-based web tool that will provide information to women with MBC, guide them through the care pathway and provide short interventions that will help them develop coping mechanisms. To reach this goal, women will be asked to participate in focus groups, and help co-create and pilot the tool. This is collaboration between the University of Cyprus’ Department of Psychology (Dr. Maria Karekla, Dr. Angelos Kassianos), the Medical School (Dr. Anastasia Constantinidou) and collaborators from the Breast Center of Cyprus, Europa Donna, the Pancyprian Federation of Cancer Patients and Friends, and Silversky3d.



“We are deeply honoured to be one of the eleven cancer organizations across the world, selected in 2019 to benefit from this program and join the international SPARC network of more than 50 organisations. This is truly a great opportunity for us to increase our impact on ensuring that MBC patients in Cyprus get the attention they deserve”, Dr Angelos Kassianos, researcher and project leader.

Breast cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers and accounts for more than 600.000 deaths worldwide in 2018. The disease can become metastatic, meaning that it has spread to other parts of the body such as the lungs, brain, liver and bones, and is the most advanced stage of the disease. There is currently no cure for MBC and treatment aims to prolong the survival of patients while preserving their quality of life.

For more information about the University of Cyprus' Department of Psychology, visit: <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/psych/en/>

For more information about the University of Cyprus SPARC project, visit: <https://www.uicc.org/case-studies/guiding-metastatic-breast-cancer-women-after-diagnosis-avatar-based-platform>

End of announcement
