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Customizing early breast cancer therapies – The 2021 St. Gallen International Breast Cancer Consensus Conference☆

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the St. Gallen Breast Cancer Conference including its famous Consensus Panel into the virtual world – making a virtue of necessity, the 2021 version of St. Gallen in addition to its stellar scientific content set new standards for innovative and optimized virtual interaction between colleagues around the globe: With more than 3.300 participants from over 100 countries in the world, the bi-annual St. Gallen International Breast Cancer Consensus Conference (SG-BCC) once more increased its outreach, making best use of the changes the pandemic imposed on all of us. As this large gathering of the global breast cancer community maintained its interdisciplinarity and excellence, the virtual participation facilitated more participation from regions that so far were not represented in numbers, e.g. Argentina and the Kingdom of Saudi, which were among the top 10 participating countries this time. Again, the latest cutting-edge research with the focus of defining the contemporary standard of care – in preparation of the traditional Saturday Panel discussion and voting - was presented by a total of 48 lectures in 10 on-demand sessions. Setting a new standard for audience interaction for large virtual congresses, SG-BCC also had 9 global live discussion sessions, and for the first time, the audience could propose questions for the Consensus Panel discussion and voting. Also, within the Consensus Panel that was stretched to two days in order to allow a global audience to participate, interactive discussion parts were very popular.

In this supplement of THE BREAST journal, 28 of the most renowned experts in their respective fields outline their view of the state-of-the-art in a variety of 15 subthemes in the biology and treatment of early breast cancer – from the latest achievements in surgery and radiotherapy to biomarkers, systemic therapy, and considerations of special patient groups. Given the extraordinary level of scientific excellence assembled in the authorship of this Supplement, it is likely that the information conveyed to readers herein will be reasonably up-to-date for the time being, at least until the next (18th) St. Gallen International Breast Cancer Consensus Conference, March 15–18, 2023, again face-to-face in Vienna.

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