Cancer screening and prevention in people with intellectual disabilities

Submission type: 90 minute symposium

Theme: Equity

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Symposium summary

Subpopulations with limited health skills and more complex health needs, such as people with intellectual disabilities (ID) are potentially underserved by generic cancer prevention and screening policies. This contributes to disparities across the entire cancer spectrum, leading to poorer oncological outcomes and ultimately premature mortality.

Understanding of how to optimize cancer care to people with ID, starting with cancer prevention and screening, is scarce. People with ID are overlooked in population monitoring and routine data (i.e. not identifiable as having an ID), and thus missing in relevant statistics informing policy and practice. Moreover, people with ID are often excluded from scientific studies due to legal (e.g. difficulties in obtaining informed consent) or methodological issues (e.g. generating unwanted heterogeneity), which limits the development of new scientific knowledge. In this symposium, we will address relevant issues related to cancer and ID, with a specific focus on screening and prevention. First we will introduce the specific relationship between ID and cancer, next, we will give an overview of cancer screening and prevention policies across Europe and their attention for disability groups, and finally we will present a proposal for a collaborative research network to build equitable, disability-inclusive cancer prevention policies.