INTRODUCTION

The presence of a strong research base is essential to the future of good quality cancer care. Clinical scientists who are able to set up and run high-quality clinical trials are vital to the advancement of new therapies. The ECCO-AACR-EORTC-ESMO Workshop on Methods in Clinical Cancer Research, formerly known as the Flims Workshop, was established 16 years ago to reverse the decline in numbers of clinical researchers. The aim of this study is to evaluate the value of the workshop on the development of future clinical scientist and the impact on their careers.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 767 subjects were contacted of which 396 fellows (subjects who applied and attended the workshop) and 362 applicants (subjects who applied and were not selected for the workshop) of the workshop editions between 2009 and 2013. The subjects were first contacted via email and then a follow-up by phone or email, requesting feedback on a total of 29 questions gauging their career progress and clinical research activities since their Workshop application.

RESULTS

The overall response rate on the survey was relatively high, 34.2% (n=241) respondents versus 65.8% (n=464) non-responders. Within the group of responders, 42.2% (n=167) belonged to the accepted applicant group (AG) and 23.4% (n=68) to the rejected applicant group (RG). The characteristics of applicants by participation have also been analysed.

- **Continent:**
  - Survey Non-responder: EU 76.51% (n=355), US 14.22% (n=66), Other 9.27% (n=43)
  - Survey Responder: EU 77.59% (n=187), US 11.62% (n=28), Other 10.79% (n=26)

- **Gender:**
  - Survey Non-responder: Male 46.98% (n=218), Female 53.02% (n=246)
  - Survey Responder: Male 50.62% (n=122), Female 49.38% (n=119)

The data of the group of responders has been analysed by their medical speciality, the status of their submitted trial and career progress. The predominant medical speciality of both the AG and RG is Medical Oncology (AG 54.2%-RG 59.7%) followed by Radiation Oncology (AG 12.7%-RG 11.9%), Surgical Oncology (AG 13.3%-RG 10.4%), Clinical Oncology (AG 8.4%-RG 9.0%) and Other (AG 11.4%-RG 9.0%), such as Paediatric Oncology, Nuclear Medicine, Neuro-Oncology & Dermato Oncology.

CONCLUSION

The survey demonstrated that the Workshop was beneficial for those who were accepted and attended. The benefits principally manifest at the level of career development and networking. However, further investigation is required to have a better view on the success of the trials developed at the Workshop. In addition, a larger group of applicants need to be studied to evaluate the career trajectory of participants in depth.

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For more information about Methods in Clinical Cancer Research (Formerly Flims) workshop contact: workshop@ecco-org.eu