

## EDITORIAL

# The Global Community Stands With American Society for Radiation Oncology's Experts in Protecting Women's Rights

Philip Poortmans, MD, PhD,<sup>\*,†</sup> Orit Kaidar-Person, MD,<sup>‡,§</sup> and Icro Meattini, MD<sup>||,¶</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>Department of Radiation Oncology, Iridium Network, Wilrijk-Antwerpen, Belgium; <sup>†</sup>Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Antwerp, Wilrijk-Antwerpen, Belgium; <sup>‡</sup>Breast Radiation Therapy Unit, Sheba Tel Hashomer, Ramat Gan, Israel; <sup>§</sup>Sackler School of Medicine, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel; <sup>||</sup>Department of Experimental and Clinical Biomedical Sciences "M. Serio," University of Florence, Florence, Italy; and <sup>¶</sup>Radiation Oncology Unit, Oncology Department, Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Careggi, Florence, Italy

Received Nov 5, 2022; Accepted for publication Nov 8, 2022

We read with great interest and fully support the statement by our colleagues leading the American Society of Radiation Oncology.<sup>1</sup> We stand with the authors, and those of accompanying commentaries, in decrying the disparities in health care which the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling will necessarily produce through eliminating the constitutional protections surrounding abortion.<sup>2-4</sup> Similar to all those authors, we are astonished that such a ruling can occur within the United States, a nation that sees freedom and equality as its watchwords, and that is widely viewed as a leading democracy on the world stage.

Sadly, the US Supreme Court judgment ruled against the basic human right of bodily autonomy. We share the concern of our American-based colleagues that this ruling will result in unsafe unregulated abortions, as well as delays and dangers to patients' health provision, by jeopardizing timely delivery of lifesaving anticancer treatments in those with cancer, for which termination of pregnancy may be required. Moreover, this decision is also discriminatory, as it even more effect those patients who are less able to access appropriate care elsewhere, including pregnancy termination when indicated.<sup>5</sup> All this will affect women's and patients' health, and bring misery to all the people involved, including the unborn child and the families. Moreover, what is happening in America may have repercussions in other countries around the world, with devastating consequences for cancer patients globally.

Instead, health is part of a dynamic system, directly linked to the concept of value and quality of life, to which every citizen should have access with full respect for the explicit principle of autonomy. Therefore, as health care providers, and irrespective of gender, religious, political or any other considerations, we strongly support our American colleagues in speaking up to protect the rights of all people to bodily autonomy, and to access essential health care including abortion.

This letter received explicit support and endorsement from the hereby listed colleagues from all around the globe;

Manuel Algara, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Barcelona, Spain;

Sara Alkner, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Lund, Sweden;

Nicolaus Andratschke, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Zürich, Switzerland;

Ane Appelt, MSc, PhD, Medical Physicist, Leeds, UK;

Meritxell Arenas Prat, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Reus, Spain;

Chiara Arilli, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy;

Cynthia Aristei, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Perugia, Italy;

Riccardo Audisio, MD, PhD, Surgical Oncologist, Göteborg, Sweden;

Marianne Aznar, MSc, PhD, Medical Physicist, Manchester, UK;

Corresponding author: Philip Poortmans, MD, PhD; E-mails: [Philip.poortmans@telenet.be](mailto:Philip.poortmans@telenet.be), [Philip.poortmans@za.be](mailto:Philip.poortmans@za.be)

Harry Bartelink, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Amsterdam, The Netherlands;

Jacques Bernier, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Genolier, Switzerland;

Indrani Bhattacharya, MD, PhD, Clinical Oncologist, Cambridge, UK;

Charlotte Billiet, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Antwerp, Belgium;

Pierre Blanchard, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Villejuif, France;

Ingrid Boere, MD PhD, Medical Oncologist, Rotterdam, The Netherlands;

Liesbeth Boersma, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Maastricht, The Netherlands;

Josep M Borrás, MD, PhD, Cancer Epidemiologist, Barcelona, Spain;

Eduard-Alexandru Bonci, MD, PhD, General Surgeon, Cluj-Napoca, Romania;

Guido Buelens, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Antwerp, Belgium;

Silvia Calusi, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy;

Kim Cao, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Paris, France;

Marta Casati, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy;

Jee Suk, Chang, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Seoul, South Korea;

Mary Coffey, MSc, Radiation Therapist, Dublin, Ireland;

Charlotte Coles, MD, PhD, Clinical Oncologist, Cambridge, UK;

Pierfranco Conte, MD, PhD, Medical Oncologist, Padova, Italy;

Juanita Crook, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Vancouver, Canada;

Jana de Boniface, MD, PhD, Surgical Oncologist, Stockholm, Sweden;

Alex De Caluwé, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Brussels, Belgium;

Maria de Lurdes Garcia Trigo, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Porto, Portugal;

Johannes (Hans) H. de Wilt, MD, PhD, Surgical Oncologist, Nijmegen, The Netherlands;

Isabelle Dehaene, MD, PhD, Obstetrician-Gynecologist, Ghent, Belgium;

Isacco Desideri, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Florence, Italy;

Vanessa Di Cataldo, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Florence, Italy;

Rosa Di Micco, MD, PhD, Breast Surgeon, Milan, Italy;

David Dodwell, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Oxford, UK;

Helena Earl, MD, PhD, Clinical Oncologist, Cambridge, UK;

Avi Eisbruch, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA;

Mahmoud El Tamer, MD, Surgeon, New York, USA;

Giuseppe Felici, MSc, Medical Physicist, Aprilia, Italy;

Pierfrancesco Franco, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Novara, Italy;

Sarah Goldman, MBA, Medical Writer, Milan, Italy;

Sanne Gordijn, MD, PhD, Obstetrician-Gynecologist, Groningen, The Netherlands;

Bahadır Gulluoglu, MD, PhD, Surgical Oncologist, Istanbul, Turkey;

Tarek Hijal, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Montréal, Canada;

Coen Hurkmans, MSc, PhD, Clinical Physicist, Eindhoven, The Netherlands;

Olivera Ivanov, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Novi Sad, Serbia;

Jacek Jassem, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Gdansk, Poland;

Orit Kaidar-Person, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Ramat Gan, Israel;

Kyubo Kim, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Seoul, South Korea;

Carine Kirkove, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Brussels, Brussels;

Vassilis Kouloulis, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Athens, Greece;

Tomas Kron, MSc, PhD, Physicist, Melbourne, Australia;

Thorsten Kühn, MD, PhD, Gynecologic Oncologist, Esslingen, Germany;

Maarten Lambrecht, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Leuven, Belgium;

Kristina Lång, MD, PhD, Radiologist, Malmö, Sweden;

Michelle Leech, MSc, PhD, Radiation Therapist, Dublin, Ireland;

Lorenzo Livi, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Florence, Italy;

Mauro Loi, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Florence, Italy;

Melanie Machiels, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Antwerp, Belgium;

Charlotte Maggen, MD, PhD, Obstetrician, Brussels, Belgium;

Livia Marrazzo, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy;

Goran Marosevic, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Icro Meattini, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Florence, Italy;

Paul Meijnders, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Antwerp, Belgium;

René Mirimanoff, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Lausanne, Switzerland;

Ingvil Mjaaland, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Stavanger, Norway;

Meena Moran, MD, Radiation Oncologist, New Haven, USA;

David Morgan, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Nottingham, UK;

Alessio G. Morganti, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Bologna, Italy;

Gerard Morton, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Toronto, Canada;

Gustavo Nader Marta, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, São Paulo, Brazil;

Sabine Oldenburg, MSc, Medical Writer, Amsterdam, The Netherlands;

Stefania Pallotta, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy;

Fedro Peccatori, MD, PhD, Medical Oncologist and Gynecologic Oncologist, Milan, Italy;

Martine Piccart, MD, PhD, Medical Oncologist, Brussels, Belgium;

Raphael Pfeffer, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Ramat Hahai, Israel;

Marina Pollán, MD, Cancer Epidemiologist, Madrid, Spain;

Philip M. Poortmans, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Antwerp, Belgium;

Martin Putora, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, St. Gallen, Switzerland;

Duvern Ramiah, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Johannesburg, South-Africa;

Ivica Ratoska, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Ljubljana, Slovenia;

Roland Reitsamer, MD, Gynecologist, Salzburg, Austria;

Vincent Remouchamps, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Namur, Belgium;

Sofia Rivera, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Villejuif, France;

Nicola Rocco, MD, PhD, Breast Surgeon, Naples, Italy;

Eli Sapir, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Ashdod, Israel;

Gabriele Simontacchi, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Florence, Italy;

Vratislav Strnad, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Erlangen, Germany;

Cinzia Talamonti, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy;

Kari Tanderup, MSc, PhD, Medical Physicist, Aarhus, Denmark;

Mareike Thompson, MD, Clinical Oncologist, Cambridge, UK;

Danijela Trokic, MD, Radiation Oncologist, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Lena van Doorn, MD, PhD, Gynecologic Oncologist, Rotterdam, The Netherlands;

Geertjan van Tienhoven, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Amsterdam, The Netherlands;

Dirk Verellen, MSc, PhD, Medical Physicist, Antwerp, Belgium;

Annemieke Witteveen, PhD, Health Researcher, Enschede, the Netherlands;

Lynda Wyld, MD, PhD, Surgical Oncologist, Sheffield, UK;

Liv Veldeman, MD, PhD, Radiation Oncologist, Ghent, Belgium;

Marie-Catherine Vozenin, MSc, PhD, Radiobiologist, Lausanne, Switzerland;

Cheng-Har Yip, MD, Breast Surgeon, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

Margherita Zani, MSc, Medical Physicist, Florence, Italy.

## Disclosures

None.

## References

1. Jacobson GM, Bajaj GK, Buatti JM, et al. ASTRO supports access to evidence-based cancer care for all patients, regardless of pregnancy status, and protection for physicians recommending and providing evidence-based care. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys* 2022;114:390-392.
2. Evans SB, Blitzblau RC, Christina Hunter Chapman CH, et al. Restricted access to abortion, the Dobbs ruling, and radiation oncology: Standing united against reproductive injustice. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys* 2022;114:385-389.
3. Chino J, Yashar C, Klopp A, Viswanathan A. Limiting access to abortion will potentially harm patients with gynecologic cancers. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys* 2022;114:396-398.
4. Beltran Ponce S, Bajaj A, Caire Baniel C, et al. Protecting our patients and trainees: The complex consequences of the Dobbs ruling. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys* 2022;114:393-395.
5. Kozhimannil KB, Hassan A, Hardeman RR. Abortion access as a racial justice issue. *N Engl J Med* 2022;387:1537-1539.