

SPARC Roundtable 2025

“Partnering with Older Adults in Oncology Research: Engagement, Endpoints & Design”



Patient-Centered Outcomes

Building on last year’s focus on *Patient-Centered Care*, this year’s SPARC Roundtable turns to *Patient-Centered Outcomes*. While patient-centered care emphasizes dignity, respect, and shared decision-making, patient-centered outcomes ask how these values are translated into research and practice. For older adults with cancer, this means moving beyond traditional clinical endpoints to outcomes that truly matter — such as quality of life, symptom relief, and the ability to remain independent. By advancing the use of patient-reported outcomes (PROs) and ensuring they inform both clinical trials and everyday practice, we can redefine success in ways that align with patients’ goals and priorities, not just survival.

Part I: *From Tokenism to True Partnership: Embedding Older Adults in Cancer Research*

The first part of the Roundtable will explore the latest *Project RISE* publication on barriers and solutions for involving patients as partners in oncology research — with a special focus on the added complexities for older adults. Perspectives will be shared across stakeholders, including the paper’s authors, academia, funders and investors, industry, regulators, and patient advocates. Each will deliver a concise three-minute viewpoint, followed by an open discussion with the audience, and a brief wrap-up.

Part II: *Redefining Success: Endpoints and PROMs that Reflect Older Adults’ Realities*

The second part will address challenges in defining and measuring outcomes for older adults with cancer. Topics will include:

- Endpoints: misplaced priorities, the lack of geriatric-specific measures, under-representation in trials, and biases introduced by higher dropout rates due to illness, fatigue, or death.
- PROMs: tools not adapted for age, limited validation for multimorbidity, frailty or cognitive decline, under-measured symptom priorities, “adapted expectations” that mask real declines, the digital divide, caregiver-reported gaps, and weak standardization.

This session will begin with an update on the seminal SIOG position paper on endpoints in geriatric oncology, followed by patient advocate feedback. We will then explore how PROM evidence can influence regulatory and legislative processes, and critically, whether such evidence will be considered acceptable by national governments and payers.

12:00 – 12:50 | Light Lunch at the Foyer

13:00 – 13:05 | Welcome & Framing

SPARC Roundtable 2025 Chair: Grant Williams – President, SIOG

- Moving from *care* → *outcomes* → *impact* for older adults with cancer.
- Brief context on last year's focus and why this year is about outcomes and endpoints.

Part I (13:05 – 13:55)

Title: *From Tokenism to True Partnership: Embedding Older Adults in Cancer Research*

13:05 – 13:10 | Setting the Scene

- **Eamonn Rogers:** Key findings from Project RISE – barriers & enablers.

13:10 – 13:25 | Stakeholder Inputs (3 min each)

- **Academia:** *Supriya Mohile* (University of Rochester, USA)
- **Research Funder/Investor:** *Alex Alencar*, (RTFCC, Switzerland)
- **Industry :** *Michael Zaiac* (Daiichi Saankyo, Switzerland)
- **Regulatory:** *Caroline Voltz* (EMA, Netherlands) [*invited*]
- **Patient Advocate:** *Ann Pennella* (SCOREBoard, USA)

13:25 – 13:50 | Panel Discussion & Audience Q&A (25 min)

- How to move beyond tokenism in engagement.
- Compensation, training, institutional frameworks.
- How funders/regulators can incentivize meaningful engagement.
- Measuring impact of patient partnership in research outcomes.

13:50 – 13:55 | Wrap-Up (5 min)

- Moderator synthesis: key solutions + priority actions.

Break (13:55 – 14:05)

Part II (14:05 – 14:55)

Title: *Redefining Success: Endpoints and PROMs that Reflect Older Adults' Realities*

14:05 – 14:10 | Framing Talk (5 min)

- **Hans Wildiers:** Updates since 2013 paper — why OS/PFS don't tell the whole story for older adults.

14:10 – 14:25 | Stakeholder Inputs (3 min each)

- **Oncologist/Geriatric Oncology Research (Trial Design):** *Lore Decoster* (University of Brussels, Belgium)
- **Real World Data Expert (data bias, competing risks, dropouts):** *Fabio Gomes* (The Christie Manchester, UK)
- **Patient Advocate (PROMs not age-adapted, caregiver gaps):** *Mariia Dzhus* (Cancer Patients Europe, Belgium)
- **HTA/Payer Perspectives (what evidence regulators & payers need):** *Nils Gutacker* (University of York, UK) [invited]

14:25 – 14:50 | Panel Discussion & Audience Q&A (25 min)

- Beyond survival: functional independence, QoL, cognition, caregiver impact.
- Tackling dropout bias and competing mortality.
- PROM validation for frailty, multimorbidity, cognitive decline.
- Incentives for inclusion of older adults (funders, regulators, HTA).
- Standards and harmonization — what's realistic in 5 years?

14:50 – 14:55 | Wrap-Up (5 min)

- Moderator synthesis: towards consensus on “meaningful endpoints.”

Roundtable Closing (14:55 – 15:00)

- **Chair's final 5 min:**
 - Recap key takeaways from both parts.
 - Highlight “next steps” → propose follow-on working group (engagement + endpoints).
 - Invite stakeholders to share resources/contacts for collaboration.