

Meeting with the Espoir Pancréas Association

Which group is most affected by pancreatic cancer?

Pancreatic cancer generally affects people over the age of 60, with a peak in diagnoses around 70–75 years old. It used to be a rare cancer among younger individuals, but over the past 2–3 years, there has been an increase in cases among people aged 30–40.

Do you know which populations are at risk?

Populations at risk primarily include individuals with a family history of pancreatic cancer, those with type 2 diabetes, smokers, and people with a diet high in fats or excessive alcohol consumption. Individuals with certain genetic conditions, such as Lynch syndrome or chronic pancreatitis, are also at higher risk. However, many testimonies show that it is possible to be in perfect health and still receive a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

Who makes up the association?

The Espoir Pancréas association brings together patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, their relatives, caregivers, as well as healthcare professionals. The goal is to provide support, share information, and raise public awareness about the disease.

What treatments are currently available or proposed? Other than surgery? Which treatment is most commonly offered?

Treatments for pancreatic cancer include surgery (when possible), chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and increasingly, targeted therapies and immunotherapies. The most commonly offered treatment remains chemotherapy (FOLFIRINOX or Gemzar + Abraxane), depending on the stage of the disease.

Have you heard about any promising treatments?

Over the past three years, significant progress has been observed in treatment options. Promising treatments are currently being developed, including gene therapies, immunotherapies, and targeted treatments. Clinical trials for mRNA-based anti-tumor vaccines, such as those being developed at the Institut de Cancérologie de Lorraine (ICL), are showing encouraging results in preventing recurrences after surgery.

What is the patient experience like? What are the main challenges they face?

Patients with pancreatic cancer face major challenges related to late diagnosis, pain management, treatment side effects, and the psychological impact of the disease. The lack of information and specific support regarding the illness is also a significant difficulty, particularly in the early stages after diagnosis.

What is your role within this association? Are you the founder, and why?

Philippe FRANCOIS-STEININGER founded Espoir Pancréas following the death of his

wife, who was herself affected by this cancer. Espoir Pancréas works to support pancreatic cancer patients and their families. We organize support groups, regularly share information with our audience about available treatments, and hold events and conferences. We also collaborate with the medical community to raise awareness about pancreatic cancer and work hand in hand to improve the patient care pathway.

Do you think intravenous administration would be acceptable for patients?

This depends on the treatment and the patients' preferences. For some treatments, such as chemotherapy, intravenous administration is common and generally well tolerated. However, acceptability can vary depending on side effects, the patient's general condition, and their comfort. Alternatives such as oral treatments are preferred whenever possible, but in some cases, intravenous administration is required for reasons of efficacy.