

PRESS RELEASE

NEW FRONTIERS OF BREAST CONSERVATIVE SURGERY

Milan, 27th June 2005 – A new methodology has been devised at the European Institute of Oncology that allows to obtain the benefits of conservative surgery even in case of advanced cancer or multiple cancers in the same breast: the combined intervention of Senology, Plastic Surgery and Radiotherapy allows the patient to spare her areola and nipple, even when a large or multi-focal cancer makes it necessary to perform a radical removal of the mammal gland (mastectomy). The results for the 400 patients treated so far, in terms of effectiveness and aesthetics, are excellent in 80% of the cases. The methodology, called *nipple sparing*, presents three phases. When a mastectomy must be performed (today in about 20% of the cases of breast cancer) before the intervention, the physicians check with specific diagnostic examinations that the specific areolar zone doesn't show cancer cells. Then, the surgeon performs the removal intervention, leaving under this zone enough tissue to guarantee the vascularization of the area and its sensitivity. Immediately after this phase, still in the operating theatre, a precautinary intra-intervention radiotherapy is performed; the following step is the intervention of plastic surgery needed for the insertion of the prothesis. The patient leaves the operating theatre with her breast already rebuilt and treated with radiotherapy. The breast is the very symbol of womanliness, with strong emotional values. In case of cancer, to lose a breast or seeing it spoiled represents a tragedy added to the illness. That is why IEO has always considered extremely important the sparing of physical integrity and the need not to deprive a woman of such an important part of her body; for this reason, the Division of Plastic Surgery works together the Division of Oncology with forefront methods, to be able to "return" the breast to the patient during the treatment of her cancer. The sparing of the nipple is the latest achievement; in fact, we know that this part of the breast has a fundamental psychological value for women. In future, the Institute will engage in furtherly reduce the risk of recidive (reappearance of the illness) in the area spared by surgery. To this purpose, in collaboration with Nuclear Medicine, a new methodology is being developed that used radionuclides – that is, substances provided with small radioactive charges – to directly and selectively channel on the area to be treated (after surgical removal) a dose of radioactivity sufficient to strike any residual cancer cells.