

Hedvig Hricak, MD, PhD
Presentation to
Estée Lauder Field Staff
Wednesday, February 6, 2008 – 8:30 am.

Leonard Lauder graciously welcomed Dr. Hedvig Hricak and introduced her to the Estée Lauder Regional Vice Presidents. Dr. Hricak was invited in order to discuss her research that has been funded by The Breast Cancer Research Foundation through generous support from the Estée Lauder Field Staff. Dr. Hricak is Chairman of the Department of Radiology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and has been a visiting professor at more than 30 institutions worldwide. Mr. Lauder thanked Dr. Hricak for her remarkable work and dedication to the cause. He acknowledged why the Field Staff's support of breast cancer research through Dr. Hricak's work is truly making a difference.

Dr. Hricak spoke about how technology has advanced medical treatment over the past 50 years. Through sophisticated imaging devices, radiologists are better able to detect breast cancer, identify the stage, and choose the most effective treatment. Imaging is not only key to cancer diagnosis and treatment but also for Alzheimer's and other cognitive impairments. MRIs also provide the ability to understand the brain's responses to stimuli and can identify individual strengths and recognize weaknesses. For example, interpersonal skill can be detected through brain activity in certain areas.

Dr. Hricak noted the decrease in the number of cancer deaths among men and women in the US since 2002. Through improved mammography and other digital technology advancements, breast cancer mortality rates have been reduced by 27%. Since sensitivity to mammograms is only 41% and MRI's are higher in the 80%, there is still a need for breast self-examination and physical examination by physicians.¹

She pointed out that cancer remains a huge global challenge, particularly in developing countries. Compared to 2000, in 2020 the global cancer burden will increase 50%, roughly 150 million new cases in the next two decades, with most of these in the low and middle income countries.²

Dr. Hricak described her BCRF-funded research in training radiologists from South Eastern European (SEE) countries. Thanks to BCRF support, in October 2006, Croatia became the first SEE country that has adopted a breast-screening program. She is now focusing on other SEE countries, with a special emphasis on Russia, a very large challenge.

In the Q&A session, Dr. Hricak stated is optimistic about the future and foresees predictive genetic screening, as part of a pre-emptive and personalized approach to medicine, within the next five to six years. She also said that women seeking the best place for screening mammography should be sure to select a center that offers comprehensive services (not only mammography but also sonography and magnetic resonance imaging).

¹ E. Pissano at al: EMJM 2005

² 2007 IOM Report