

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to welcome you at the HPV in Human Pathology conference in Prague, organized at a historic moment, following the launch of a vaccine against the papillomavirus, an agent etiologically linked to the second most prevalent tumour in women worldwide. Even though the introduction of the vaccine was a very important step in the prevention of cervical cancer and other diseases related to papillomavirus infection, the introduction of HPV vaccination has stimulated much debate on many aspects of the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HPV related diseases. Major impact of HPV vaccination is expected in the incidence of cervical cancer but its introduction could also favorably influence the incidence of HPV-related cancers in other locations, particularly in the anogenital and head and neck region. The vaccination will also affect the occurrence of benign lesions, such as genital warts and even laryngeal papillomatosis. A significant complication, however, is that HPV vaccines do not protect against all HPV types involved in cervical cancer development and do not appear to protect women who are currently infected with those HPV types present in the vaccine. Therefore, even vaccinated women must continue to attend regular cervical screening, and vaccination programmes must be effectively integrated with organized screening programmes to ensure maximum protection against cervical cancer. Therefore, cancer prevention now appears to require an interdisciplinary approach involving practitioners of different disciplines; pediatricians, vaccinologists, gynaecologists, otolaryngologists, urologists, surgeons, cytologists, public health officials and screening programmes administrators must learn to work together in a complex and coordinated fashion to ensure maximum effectiveness.

The Prague conference is a result of the 23rd International Papillomavirus Meeting (September 2006) at which the International Papillomavirus Society expressed its recommendation to organize multidisciplinary conferences on the prevention of HPV-related diseases in all European countries. It was in response to this call that the Institute of Hematology and Blood Transfusion, in collaboration with European Cervical Cancer Association and the Czech Medical Association JEP (the Czech Oncological Society, the Czech Society for Epidemiology & Microbiology, the Czech Society of Otorhinolaryngology & Head & Neck Surgery, the Czech Society for Clinical Cytology and the Czech Society of Gene & Cell Therapy & Anti-Cancer Vaccines) decided to organize the conference called "HPV in Human Pathology."

The emphasis of the conference is to provide practicing physicians with the most up-to-date, synoptic information and to share with them the opinions of experts in the field on emerging and challenging topics.

We would like to thank you for attending the HPV in Human Pathology conference in Prague, which we hope will provide opportunities for many inspiring meetings and debates.

Ruth Tachezy
On behalf of the Organizing Committee