

10 November 2016

## Umberto Veronesi (28 November 1925 – 8 November 2016)

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is saddened by the passing on 8 November 2016 in Milan of Professor Umberto Veronesi, whose name will remain associated with pioneering research on breast-conserving surgery for small breast cancers. In the early 1970s, he initiated, contrary to the prevailing advice among surgeons, a randomized clinical trial comparing the well-established radical mastectomy with a simple resection of one quadrant of the breast (plus axillary dissection and radiotherapy) for breast cancers of less than 2 cm in diameter. By 1981 the results, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, showed the essential equivalence between the two procedures in terms of mortality and disease-free interval; the simple resection is much less disfiguring.

Professor Veronesi was recognized worldwide as a leading figure in clinical cancer research. Born in 1925, he started his career at the National Cancer Institute in Milan, of which he was the Director from 1975 until 1994, when he moved to become Scientific Director of the European Institute of Oncology (IEO), which he had founded. Professor Veronesi also participated in the founding of the Italian Association of Cancer Research (AIRC) in 1965 and of the European School of Oncology (ESO) in 1982. He was very actively engaged in the public arena in discussions on end-of-life decisions, termination of pregnancy, prenatal diagnosis, and other health-related ethical and political issues. He served as Minister of Health of Italy in 2000–2001, reinforcing anti-smoking measures. He served as a member of the IARC Scientific Council in 1972–1975 and was the recipient of the IARC Medal of Honour in 2004.

Our deepest condolences to Professor Veronesi's family.