



My World

Mariagrazia De Lisa is a second-year resident at the medical oncology department of the university hospital Ospedali Riuniti delle Marche, in Ancona, Italy. She came top out of 63 other students from 25 countries in the learning assessment test at the end of this year's ESO Masterclass in Clinical Oncology.

■ Why I chose to work in oncology

Oncology is the medical branch that offered me the greatest opportunity to combine clinical activity with biologic studies. It also meant a lot to me because someone very close to me suffered from cancer.

■ What I love most about my job

I like the fact that I take care of the person/patient as a whole: the medical aspects, but also psychological and family ones. I also love the opportunity it gives me to build and maintain strong relationships with patients and their families, sharing with them hopes and difficulties, successes and failures.

■ The hardest thing about my job

Despite sharing very deep feelings with patients and their relatives, I am all the time required to keep my professional attitude. The need to coordinate well with several other medical figures working with the patient adds interest to the job, but is also a challenge.

■ What I've learned about myself

Working in oncology has taught me to value the presence of my parents and people I love the most, because you never know what could happen in

the future. I appreciate more the simple things of life that I used to take for granted – being able to work, study, walk and live an autonomous life.

■ I'll never forget

All the professors and colleagues who have set an example and transmitted to me the passion required to do this work. I remember one in particular, who a group of us accompanied in a visit to a young patient with a colorectal cancer. After asking about his familial history, he started to focus on his face and body skin, looking for spots around and inside his mouth and nostrils. He then asked us which syndrome he was suspected to have. This taught me about the process of clinical reasoning.

■ A high point in my career

I'm just starting out, and at the moment I am very happy just to be working next to very skilled and highly qualified people. I hope to have the opportunity to get experience abroad.

■ I wish I were better at ...

Speaking in public. I would like to improve my self-confidence and the capacity to promote my own ideas, opinions and projects.

■ What I value most in a colleague

Sincerity and the capacity to collaborate and work in team to guarantee the best care for the patient.

■ The most significant advance in my specialism in recent years

Learning more information in more depth about the biomolecular pathways that control the growth and cell proliferation at the base of carcinogenesis I believe has been the most important, interesting and exciting progress in oncology.

■ My advice to someone entering my specialism today would be ...

Sincere passion and a true commitment are both required to work in a field where disappointments and failures happen quite frequently. Your relationship with the patient and their family is the biggest source of satisfaction.

■ What I wish I'd learnt at medical school

I'd like to have gained more confidence in applying the evidence-based medicine approach, in order to have a better grounding in how to deal with clinical studies and the world of scientific research. ■