



EBMT 47th Annual Meeting

14-17 March 2021 | VIRTUAL

‘Health inequalities and equality, diversity and inclusion at EBMT’

Written by:

Raffaella Greco

John Murray

The major focus of EBMT is high quality science, supporting scientists and individuals with diverse perspectives, talents and experiences, promoting equal access to education and learning, and giving a voice to patients and the global health care community.

As part of this commitment, from 2020 EBMT held within the Annual Meeting a dedicated Forum of structured talks and discussion to learn from its members about their experiences as well as opportunities in the hematology community related to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

This year’s session offered a great perspective on ‘Health inequalities and equality, diversity and inclusion at EBMT’.

Ben Summerskill described the progress in promoting diversity and inclusion within the Society. Important steps have been taken in the last years, starting in 2019 with the creation of a working group dedicated to EDI within EBMT. He shared his perspectives and experiences, by differentiating a positive action from positive discrimination, that organisational change occurs in small increments and there is no magic button to press and finally suggesting the next steps for EBMT to address these issues.

Silvia Montoto underlined the importance to gather information directly from EBMT members and staff about their composition and acquire their views on EDI issues. In 2020 EBMT performed two EDI surveys, one quantitative and the other qualitative.

Results were presented in this session. Interesting and varied views from the qualitative survey suggested future development points for diversity and the inclusion of advocates.

Anne-Pierre Pickaert provided new insights on health inequalities from a patient perspective. She pointed out the opportunity to have a more diverse donor registry, better allowing all patients to find an adequate donor, including those with a non-white background. Moreover, she promoted psychological support for donors, and called for governments to support initiatives to reach underserved communities, currently not well represented in registries.

The talk by *Soulaiman Elias* explored issues faced by those from backgrounds traditionally disadvantaged in medicine. His personal journey providing care in the Syrian Arab Republic described health inequalities and the challenges of providing care in an area of conflict. Cooperation between countries, qualified human resources and the support and guidance of EBMT can contribute greatly to reduce the disparity in resources.

Raffaella Greco and *John Murray*, as chairs of this session, guided a stimulating and interesting final debate, taking questions from the audience, to address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with EBMT members.

We look forward to encouraging all EBMT members to attend future EDI sessions, to foster our global hematology community.