




# Frontline fighters: the continued fight against COVID-19

Huseyin Akilli, Ankara, Turkey; Husnu Celik, Adana, Turkey; Cagatay Taskiran , Istanbul, Turkey; Esra Bilir , Istanbul, Turkey and Murat Gultekin , Ankara, Turkey

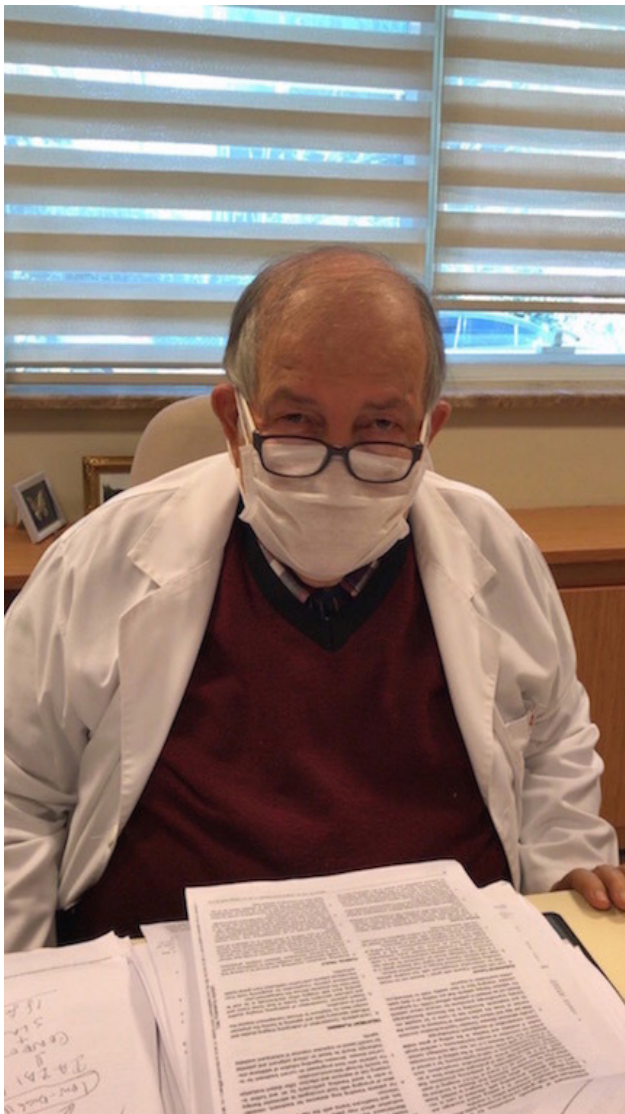
Recently, we have been devastated by the coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Globally, there is a huge fight against coronavirus led by medical staff on the frontlines. Most healthcare providers are dedicated to battling this devastating disease and as a result are away from their families and loved ones. Nearly 3000 healthcare workers are already infected and some are returning to the frontlines again after recovery. However, we have lost some of our brave warriors

and colleagues during this fight. Despite the terrifying news from different regions of the world, we see the amazing resilience and dedication from numerous colleagues and stand proud about so many healthcare workers that never hesitated in these terrible days. This has also been true for the gynecological oncology community, as clinical care still remains vibrant throughout the world. One group that deserves extra recognition are the countless physicians

who at the end of their career, some even returning from retirement, have answered the call and remained true to their oath to help alleviate pain and suffering and have joined the fight against COVID-19.

In this segment, we would like to recognize giants in our field such as Dr. Ali Ayhan (Figure 1). He is among well-known leaders from Turkey who has still maintained his daily clinical activities for his patients during the pandemic, despite being considered at high risk of infection from COVID-19, due to his advanced age. Dr. Ali Ayhan is the founder of modern gynecologic oncology in Turkey. He has introduced not only new surgical techniques but also the principles of multi-disciplinary tumor boards, as well as participating in national and international meetings in the country. He pioneered the establishment of the Turkish Society of Gynecologic Oncology in 1989 and has worked with the European Society of Gynecological Oncology (ESGO) council for many years. He also has had a leadership role in the establishment of the European Network of Young Gynecological Oncologists (ENYGO) and the ESGO textbook.

During the start of the pandemic, many doctors decreased the volume of their clinical practice, not only for the safety of the patients but also for their personal safety. The COVID-19 outbreak was detected in Turkey in early March 2020, and just like in the rest of the world, it has changed our lives and the lives of our families. This was especially relevant in the elderly. However, Dr. Ali Ayhan never stopped his clinical services since the first day of the pandemic. This has motivated the entire community of gynecologic oncologists, particularly our young colleagues, to bond much closer together. His endless energy has been the main driver of the encouragement of all against the pandemic. He adapted to the current situation even at the age of 80 and continues training and education by webinars and virtual lectures, and telemedicine with his patients. Avoiding unnecessary examinations and surgeries for elective



**Figure 1** Prof Dr Ali Ayhan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Corners of the world

cases is the top priority for all of us, but meanwhile with the necessary COVID-19 preventive measures we should also maintain appropriate clinical care for our patients who are in dire need of their doctors.

Dr Ali Ayhan, is just one example from the world of gynecological oncology who exemplifies defiance against adversity. We are certain that there are countless others in our community who have never given up and continue to provide the much needed clinical care for their patients. This article, in recognition of Dr Ali Ayhan, is dedicated to the ones whom we have lost during this battle, for the ones who are still keeping the communities tightly bound to each other and fight against the pandemic on the frontlines. We are sure that the world will win this war. We are sure that gynecological cancer patients will also continue to fight

against cancer, as long as we have such volunteers and workers in our community with such boundless energy .

The knight's life belongs to those who need him, not himself!!

**Correspondence to** Mr Huseyin Akilli, Gynecology and Obstetrics Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Baskent University School of Medicine, Ankara 06490, Turkey; hsynakilli@hotmail.com

**Twitter** Esra Bilir @esragbilir

**Contributors** All authors provided significant contributions.

**Funding** The authors have not declared a specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

**Competing interests** None declared.

**Patient consent for publication** Not required.

**Provenance and peer review** Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

This article is made freely available for use in accordance with BMJ's website terms and conditions

for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic or until otherwise determined by BMJ. You may use, download and print the article for any lawful, non-commercial purpose (including text and data mining) provided that all copyright notices and trade marks are retained.

© IGCS and ESGO 2020. No commercial re-use. See rights and permissions. Published by BMJ.



**To cite** Akilli H, Celik H, Taskiran C, *et al.* *Int J Gynecol Cancer* 2020;**30**:1077–1078.

Accepted 30 April 2020  
Published Online First 23 May 2020

*Int J Gynecol Cancer* 2020;**30**:1077–1078.  
doi:10.1136/ijgc-2020-001534

### ORCID iDs

Cagatay Taskiran <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0936-552X>

Esra Bilir <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4499-6543>

Murat Gultekin <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4221-4459>