

IGCS 2023 Award Recipients

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The IGCS Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have consistently performed outstanding service and have contributed major accomplishments in research and treatment that span their careers in gynecologic oncology.



Michael Höckel, MD, PhD
Germany

Dr. Michael Höckel's career epitomizes the harmonious fusion of scientific inquiry and clinical practice, resulting in tangible benefits for countless patients. Born in 1950, Dr. Höckel was socialized and educated in the Rhein-Main area, West Germany. He studied chemistry and medicine at the Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz and was trained in obstetrics and gynecology at the University Hospital. His clinical career terminated with the chairman position of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Leipzig, former East Germany, held from 1998-2017.

In his professional work, he strived to combine the logic of scientific argument with clinical practice. First attempts included the use of biologicals for therapeutic angiogenesis to overcome tissue hypoxia in surgical flaps. The hypoxia issue paved the way to pathophysiology and finally pathoanatomy of malignant tumors as prerequisites for cancer surgery.

From the analysis of locoregional carcinoma spread patterns in the context of current insights into metazoan evolution and development, tissue regeneration and peripheral immune tolerance, he deduced a morphogenesis model as foundation of ontogenetic anatomy and the ontogenetic cancer field model, clinically translated into novel surgeries to treat gynecologic cancer with better outcome.

Dr. Höckel's remarkable journey reminds us that a single individual's passion and dedication can have a profound and lasting impact extending far beyond the research lab and operating room. His receipt of the IGCS Lifetime Achievement Award is a testament to a lifetime dedicated to clinical research and surgical innovation in pursuit of improving the lives of women affected by gynecologic cancers everywhere. **AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN GYNECOLOGIC SURGERY**

Recognizes gynecologic oncologists who have had a sustained career in academic surgery and have made seminal contributions in clinical surgery or surgical education that established new benchmarks or paradigms.



Christina Fotopoulou, MD, PhD
United Kingdom

Dr. Fotopoulou is a distinguished figure in the field of gynecologic oncology, renowned for her exceptional surgical and scientific expertise. Being Greek – German, having lived and worked in Germany, Greece and the United Kingdom she has a

deep knowledge of the regional variations in practice, mentality and healthcare recourses across the different countries in Europe and has therefore fought and strived for the standardization and homogenization of surgical oncological care internationally.

She is the Professor of Gynaecological Cancer Surgery in the Department of Surgery and Cancer, Faculty of Medicine of Imperial College London, UK and the Deputy director of the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre at Imperial College. She still holds a honorary chair in the Gynaecology Department at the Charite' University of Berlin, where she was trained and then later took the role of the Vice Director of the Gynaecological Department.

She and has been an elected member of the ESGO- council and is also a member of the German AGO- Ovarian Cancer Group. In her role as the Chair of the guidelines committees of the British Gynaecological Cancer Society (BGCS) and of ESGO (European Society of Gynaecologic Oncology) she has established national and international guidelines for the treatment of gynecological cancers with the aim to homogenize and standardize care in Europe and beyond. Moreover, she has been part of the core group to develop and establish quality indicators for the international accreditation of gynecological cancer centers towards a centralization of oncological care.

As an expert adolescent gynecological surgeon, she has published on surgical techniques regarding uterovaginal reconstruction. She has served as mentor for young gynecological oncologists and women in the field and has co-developed mentorship programs to minimize gender disparities in gynecological cancer surgery. Sharing her expertise in the training of numerous gynecological oncologists from all over the world, she has significantly impacted the treatment landscape throughout Europe, especially in the UK.

Her scientific expertise focuses on profiling of ovarian cancer heterogeneity and integration of tumor biology factors with surgical effort under the umbrella of individualization of surgical care. Her efforts in unraveling the diverse genetic and biological characteristics of these tumors and recognizing that each patient's unique tumor biology should be woven into the surgical strategy have earned her the IGCS Award for Outstanding Achievement in Gynecologic Oncology Surgery.

In a world where medical science continues to advance at an incredible pace, Dr. Fotopoulou stands as a testament to the power of specialization, innovation, and a deep commitment to improving the lives of those she serves while representing a role model for upcoming gynecological oncologists. Her work exemplifies the potential for progress when surgical and scientific expertise converge in the pursuit of better care and outcomes for patients with gynecological cancer. **GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN AWARD**

Recognizes outstanding individuals, organizations or programs who work to improve access to quality gynecologic oncology services in low to middle income countries or in areas of need within more developed nations.



**Professor Agnes Binagwaho, MD,
M(Ped), PHD
Rwanda**

Professor Agnes Binagwaho, MD, M(Ped), PHD currently resides in Rwanda having returned to the country in 1996, two years after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. She is the retired

Vice Chancellor and co-founder of the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) (in 2015), an initiative of Partners In Health based in Rwanda which focuses on changing how health care is delivered around the world by training global health professionals who strive to deliver more equitable, quality health services for all.

Previously, she has provided clinical care in the public sector and has served the Rwandan health sector (1996-2016) in high-level government positions, first as the Executive Secretary of Rwanda's National AIDS Control Commission, then as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, and lastly as Minister of Health for five years. She is a Professor of Pediatrics at UGHE, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and an Adjunct Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine.

During her tenure, Dr. Binagwaho led Rwanda's effort to roll out a national vaccination campaign. Over 90% of girls in school were immunized against human papillomavirus (HPV) as a result, making Rwanda the first African nation to introduce this vaccine.

She is a member of multiple editorial, advisory and directors' boards, including the Think20 (T20), the Rockefeller Foundation, the African Europe Foundation and the African Union Commission on African COVID-19 Response. Professor Binagwaho is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Medicine and the World Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the African Academy of Sciences. She is an Emerson Elder and has published over 250 peer-reviewed articles and was named among the 100 Most Influential African Women for 2020 and 2021.

Presenting the IGCS Global Humanitarian Award to Dr. Binagwaho recognizes her exceptional dedication to defy stigma, prevent suffering and disease, and improve the lives of women facing gynecologic cancers in some of the most challenging

circumstances globally. Her work underscores the belief that quality healthcare is a fundamental human right, and her relentless pursuit of this ideal has had a profound and lasting impact on women's health and well-being in not only in Rwanda, but far beyond. **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD**

Recognizes individuals deeply committed to the profession whose work and accomplishments set a standard of excellence. This award recognizes the importance of teaching as an integral part of women's cancer care and the lasting impact of educators to shape and inspire future generations of clinicians and researchers.



Anna Plotkin, MD, FRCPC
Canada

A specialist in biomarkers in endometrial cancer with an interest in the optimization of available resources, Dr. Anna Plotkin understands the crucial need for skilled pathologists as an integral part of gynecologic cancer care teams everywhere.

Dr. Plotkin is a pathologist at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre who completed her postgraduate training in anatomical pathology at the University of Toronto with a fellowship in gynecological and breast pathology. Her special interests are breast and gynecological oncology, as well as medical education. She is an Associate Professor and the Director of Continuing Professional Development at the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology at the University of Toronto.

As the first Chair of the IGCS Pathology Working Group, Dr. Plotkin worked tirelessly to design, develop, and collect resources for an online library (the IGCS Pathology Corner, now a part of IGCS Education360 Learning Portal) for over 4,000 IGCS Members worldwide to improve their knowledge and understanding of pathology for the early detection, diagnosis, and treatment planning of gynecologic cancers.

By sharing her expertise and collaborating with healthcare professionals in regions facing resource constraints, she made a profound impact by equipping others with the knowledge to deliver quality care, building capacity for more comprehensive cancer care. She regularly lends her time to the IGCS Project ECHO® virtual tumor boards, empowering clinicians to make informed decisions, optimize available resources, and ultimately save lives by improving the accuracy of cancer diagnosis and treatment.

By honoring Dr. Plotkin with the IGCS Excellence in Teaching Award, we celebrate her exceptional contributions to interdisciplinary education and recognize the vital role of pathologists within the field of gynecologic oncology. Her mentorship extends beyond traditional boundaries, reaching aspiring pathologists in under-resourced countries, where her knowledge and guidance are invaluable. [View Past Award Recipients](#)