**ESMO/JSMO joint symposium: Immune checkpoint blockade in cancer therapy: new insights, opportunities, and prospects for a cure**

**AOJ – B  European views on clinical trials in Asia**

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**Background:** The number of new drug candidates, of new potential targets in cancer is increasing tremendously, pointing out the need for more patients participating to clinical and translational research. In this regard, Asia, because of its specificities, appears everyday more attractive, and several key trials, recently conducted in Asia, have definitely shown how much this part of the world is now playing a crucial role in the global market of drug development. It might be interesting to highlight some specificities:

1. the prevalence of cancer in general and of gastrointestinal tract in particular is higher in Asia than in the rest of the world. The case if stomach cancer is one of the best example.
2. unfortunately, in Asia as a whole, mortality rate is quite high partly related to a higher number of advanced cases at diagnostic and limited access to effective therapies, although there is high disparity between countries
3. the quality of the clinical trials have hugely improved over the past one or two decades, even though some countries in Asia, such as Japan, have a long tradition of excellence in clinical research.
4. the genetic of the Asian populations are sometimes very different from their US or European counterparts, leading to differences in drug dosage, schedules and tolerance profiles.
5. A developing oncology market is emerging in Asia and the reimbursement of oncology drugs is improving; of note, cancer treatment in many asian countries still represent a high unmet medical need. These specificities explain the growth of clinical research and drug development trials in Asia. For instance, Japan was ranked 8th in terms of number of ongoing clinical trials in 2007 with 2081 studies and went up to the 3rd position in 2012 with 2942 studies. China moved from the 22nd in 2007 to the 11th position in 2012. With the aging of very large populations, often highly exposed to carcinogenic environments and behaviours, the incidence of cancer in Asia is going to continue to increase at the significantly high speed, pointing out the real need for active, well conducted clinical trials in cancer in this part of the world, in cooperation with the US and European ongoing clinical research.