

50 years of Total Mesorectal Excision: celebrating the legacy of Bill Heald

International Rectal Cancer Meeting 2026

May 22nd – May 23th 2026

Champalimaud Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal

Day 1 – Friday, May 22nd

8:30 – 9:30

Opening Ceremony - Welcome Address

Leonor Beleza, President of the Champalimaud Foundation
João Silveira Botelho, Vice-president of the Champalimaud Foundation
Markus Büchler, Director of the Botton-Champalimaud Pancreatic Cancer Centre

Video - *The Legacy of Bill Heald*

09:30 – 10:20

Session 1 – Rectal Cancer: Recent Innovations

Chairs: Rob Madoff, USA | Jaime Vilaça, Oporto | Miguel Cunha, Lisbon

1. *Molecular Subtypes: Towards Precision Medicine in Rectal Cancer - Iris Nagtegaal, Nijmegen*
2. *Advances in MRI for Rectal Cancer: from Diagnosis to Decision-making - Gina Brown, London*
3. *Robotic Surgery: Beyond Conventional Minimally Invasive Techniques - Amjad Parvaiz, Lisbon*

10:20 - 10:50 - Coffee Break

10:50 – 12:00

Session 1 (Cont.) – Rectal Cancer: Recent Innovations

Chairs: Rob Madoff, USA | Jaime Vilaça, Lisbon | Miguel Cunha, Lisbon

4. *AI in Colorectal Surgery: Current Applications and Future Directions - Michele Diana, Strasbourg*
5. *RESTAGE Project - Andrada Ianus, London*
6. *Upcoming Practice-changing Trials - Quentin Denost, Bordeaux*

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

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13:00 – 16:40

Session 2 – Rectal Cancer: The Place of Non-Surgical Treatment

Chairs: Anna Martling, Stockholm | Phil Paty, New York | Inês Santiago, Lisbon

1. *Radiotherapy for Organ Preservation: How Far Can We Push Dose Intensification?* - Oriol Parés, Lisbon
2. *Is Modern Systemic Therapy the Key to Response Optimization?* - Myriam Chalabi, Amsterdam
3. *Total Neoadjuvant Treatment: the Cornerstone of Organ Preservation* - Julio Garcia Aguillar, New York
4. *Watch and Wait: Precision Selection for Organ Preservation* - Rodrigo Perez, São Paulo

Rethinking TNT: Can it be Safely Omitted in Selected Patients?

5. *Systemic Therapy Toxicity: When Does Intensification Become Overtreatment?* - Carlos Carvalho, Lisbon
6. *Primary Surgery as an Alternative to TNT: Patient Selection Matters* - Laura Fernandez, Lisbon

15:00 - 16h40 *Live Surgery: The Principle of TME* - Amjad Parvaiz & Bill Heald, Lisbon

16:40 – 17:00 - Coffee Break

17:00 – 19:00

Session 3 - Mastering TME: Techniques, Approaches and Evolving Concepts

Chairs: Steven Wexner, New York | Martin Schneider, Giessen | Nuno Rama, Coimbra

1. *Functional Pelvic Anatomy for TME Surgery* - Mehmet Ayhan Kuzu, Ankara
2. *TME: Principles, Technique and Oncologic Concepts* - Jurgen Weitz, Dresden
3. *Open TME: When is the Open Approach Still Relevant?* - Ian Jenkins, London
4. *Laparoscopic TME: Current Role and Technical Considerations* - Pedro Brandão, Porto
5. *Robotic TME: Enhancing Surgical Execution* - José Azevedo, Lisbon
6. *From APR to Pelvic Exenteration: Expanding the Boundaries of TME* - Takashi Akiyoshi, Toquio
7. *TTSS: Expanding the Surgical Armamentarium* - Antonino Spinelli, Milan
8. *TaTME: Lessons Learned and Current Best Practice* - Masaaki Ito, Tokyo

19:30 – 22:30 - Conference Dinner

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Day 2 – Saturday, May 23rd

9:00 – 11:00

Session 4 - A Tribute to a Living Legend

Chairs: Antonio Lacy, Barcelona | Tim Rockall, Guildford | Béla Teleky, Wien

1. *Rectal Cancer Surgery: The Good Old Days* - Werner Hohenberger, Erlangen
2. *Sky High Local Recurrence Rate* - Philip Quirke, Leeds

The Leonor Beleza Lecture

Rectal Cancer: Total Mesorectal Excision, Still the Best Solution - Bill Heald, Lisbon

3. *TME: a Global Perspective* - Brendan Moran, Basingstoke
4. *TME: Thousands of Lives Saved* - Markus Büchler, Lisbon

11:00 – 11:30 - Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:30

Session 5 - Surgical Outcome in the TME Era

Chairs: Manuel Limbert, Lisbon | Calvin Coffey, Limerick | Luís Lencastre, Porto | Hugo Domingos, Lisboa

1. *Current Controversies in Rectal Cancer Surgery* - Cornelis van de Velde, Leiden
2. *Lymph Node Dissection in Rectal Cancer: Who Really Benefits?* - Gyu Seog Choi, Daegu
3. *Stoma Yes or No* - Mina Shen, Taiwan
4. *Pelvic Exenteration: Indications and Surgical Strategy* - Geerard Beets, Maastricht
5. *Managing the Difficult TME* - Tsuyoshi Konishi, Houston
6. *Long Term Outcomes after TME: Functional Results and Quality of Life* - Frederic Ris, Geneva