



EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF THORACIC SURGEONS (ESTS)

Participant Information Sheet (PIS) for Society Research Surveys

1. About ESTS Research Surveys

The European Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ESTS) regularly conducts web-based scientific surveys across its international community to evaluate contemporary clinical practice, surgical techniques, institutional pathways, and decision-making patterns in thoracic surgery and thoracic oncology. Each official survey is initiated by an ESTS Working Group, Committee, or collaborative academic partner, peer-reviewed and supervised by the ESTS Learning Affairs Committee (LAC), and formally approved for society-wide dissemination.

2. Study Scope, Purpose, and Principal Investigator

Each survey investigates a specific clinical, technical, or educational question within thoracic surgery. The precise scientific rationale, research hypotheses, target respondent eligibility, and the designated Principal Investigator (PI) are outlined in the official invitation communication and displayed directly on the survey's introductory landing page.

3. Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal

Participation in any ESTS survey is entirely voluntary. Choosing not to participate, declining specific questions, or discontinuing at any stage will not carry any disadvantage, nor will it affect your ESTS membership status or professional standing. You are free to withdraw at any time prior to questionnaire submission simply by closing your web browser. Because submitted responses are immediately incorporated into an aggregated, fully anonymized scientific dataset, individual responses cannot be retrieved, modified, or deleted once formally submitted.

4. Data Scope, Privacy, and Anonymity

Surveys adhere to the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and international data protection standards (EU GDPR / UK Data Protection Act 2018):

- **No Patient Data:** Surveys are strictly non-clinical in nature regarding patient records. No patient-level, health-identifiable, or personal clinical data are ever requested or collected.
- **Aggregated Professional Opinions:** The collected data consist exclusively of professional opinions, practice patterns, and aggregated institutional metrics.
- **Strict Anonymity by Design:** Online survey collectors are configured to ensure that IP addresses, hardware identifiers, and respondent tracking tags are permanently suppressed and never stored. Questionnaires do not request names or personal identifiers, ensuring that responses cannot be linked back to individual participants.
- **Data Security & Custodianship:** The European Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ESTS) acts as the Data Controller. Data is securely hosted on encrypted institutional platforms, with access restricted strictly to authorized project investigators and the ESTS Survey Oversight team.

5. Study Risk Profile & Direct Benefits

Participation involves minimal risk, limited to the time required to complete the questions (typically 5–15 minutes). No personal, financial, physical, or psychological risks are associated with participating. While participants receive no direct financial compensation, their contributions directly advance clinical consensus, benchmark healthcare variations, and support evidence-based improvements in European thoracic surgery.

6. Dissemination of Findings

All survey findings are analyzed and reported exclusively in aggregate form. Results will be presented at scientific meetings (such as the ESTS Annual Congress) and submitted for publication in peer-reviewed medical and surgical journals. Individual respondents and their institutions remain completely unidentifiable in any resulting abstract, manuscript, or presentation.

7. Ethical Oversight & Governance Contacts

Because ESTS member surveys are non-interventional assessments of professional opinion among qualified healthcare specialists without patient involvement, formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is routinely waived under standard international ethical frameworks. Where mandatory by local regulations, ethical oversight is coordinated by the Principal Investigator's academic institution.

- For study-specific inquiries: Contact the Principal Investigator listed on the survey landing page.
- For ESTS survey governance: Contact the ESTS Survey Coordinator (*ostrovski.family@gmail.com*).