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ESTRO background

Being trained in solid state physics, stumbling into medical physics by sheer luck, I was captivated by the idea that as a physicist I could make a real difference for patients fighting cancer. What fascinated me even more was the realization that it's not just the technology but the collaborative efforts across different disciplines that truly make a difference. ESTRO stands out for embracing this collaborative spirit, bringing us all together creating a powerful synergy, and I take great pride in being part of this community that has become like a second family to me. ESTRO played a crucial role in my training as a medical physicist, and it's no surprise that the society had a major impact on my professional growth. My active involvement began with the invitation to chair the pre-meeting workshop "Image-Guided Radiotherapy", pilot for the IGRT course. This marked the beginning of my contributions to ESTRO, providing me the opportunity to give back to the society that had supported my growth. Since then, it has been a thrilling and, above all, delightful journey.

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| 2005-2014 | Director ESTRO course "IGRT" |
| 2007-2010 | Member European Institute of Radiotherapy (now ACROP) TG1 "In-room 3D-IGRT." |
| 2007-2011 | Teacher ESTRO course "IMRT and other conformal techniques" |
| 2010-present | Member editorial board PHIRO |
| 2011-2013 | Professional matters & membership officer |
| 2011-present | Member ESTRO board of directors |
| 2011-present | Member ESTRO Physics committee |
| 2012-present | Co-director ESTRO course "Image-guided SBRT." |
| 2013-present | Treasurer, member ESTRO executive committee |
| 2014-2022 | Member ESTRO ROSCQ |
| 2016-present | Teacher ESTRO course "Upper GI." |
| 2020-present | Member ESTRO/ACROP/AAPM TG359 "FLASH-UHDR radiation dosimetry." |
| 2023-present | Member SBRT Focus Group |



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Since 2005, I've actively participated in various annual meetings and pre-meeting workshops and courses, serving as both chair and member of scientific committees. Being chair of the 10th Biennial ESTRO meeting on Physics and Radiation Technology (Maastricht, 2009) was definitely a highlight. Additionally, engaging in multidisciplinary gatherings such as the ESTRO Agora (future leaders retreats) provided interesting experiences, and I take particular joy in the recent success of the ESTRO physics workshops. My involvement in these diverse experiences across disciplines has granted me deep insights and a comprehensive understanding of our Society.

Experience

Throughout my career, I've been passionate about connecting with professionals worldwide and fostering collaboration across different disciplines. This approach has shaped my professional and academic journey, emphasizing the belief that working together in radiation oncology can bring about the best results. I am confident that teamwork creates a powerful synergy, propelling our field and scientific understanding forward, especially within the multidisciplinary landscape of oncology. This collaborative effort is key to making a tangible difference in the lives of our patients. Additionally, I firmly believe that research, clinical experience, and education should be intertwined, not kept separate. This holistic approach, where these aspects complement and support each other, is essential for advancing our understanding and improving patient outcomes.

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| 1990-1991 | Teacher and bar tender |
| 1991-1995 | Medical Physicist, Radiation Oncology, UZBrussel |
| 1996-2016 | Director Medical Physics, Radiation Oncology, UZBrussel |
| 2000-2004 | Associate Professor, Hogeschool Antwerpen |
| 2003-2004 | Associate Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel |
| 2003-2019 | Associate Professor, Ghent University |
| 2004-2019 | Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel |
| 2016-present | Director Medical Physics, Iridium Netwerk, Antwerp |
| 2019-present | Professor, Antwerp University |
| 2023-present | Associate Professor, KU Leuven |

Education and Qualifications

I've always found immense joy and satisfaction in educating and mentoring the next generation. This passion is evident in my active involvement with the ESTRO school, my academic career, and contributions to various continuing education courses for radiotherapy technologists, medical doctors, and scientists. Witnessing my former students grow into successful leaders and scientists fills me with great pride (so far 7 BSc, 57 MSc, 18 PhD).

To provide a bit of background, I successfully completed a PhD in medical sciences from Vrije Universiteit Brussel (1998), combining clinical work as a medical physicist in radiation oncology



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with research (the ideal environment to focus on patient centered and real-world clinical research). My focus has always been at the intersection of medical physics and practical implementation of advanced technology. The title of my PhD manuscript, "Practical aspects of Medical Physics associated with the clinical implementation of conformal radiation therapy" wraps it up in a way. Fast, but safe uptake of innovative treatment modalities has been the main theme throughout my scientific career, yielding >200 peer-reviewed articles (Hirsch-index: 51), >200 abstracts in international journals, and roles as an editor or contributing author in several books. I've had the honor of receiving the Spinoza Honorary Professorship (in recognition of outstanding contributions to medicine and healthcare, Academisch Medisch Centrum, University of Amsterdam, 2009), and both the Breur (ESTRO Gold Medal, 2015) and Emanuel van der Schueren (Belgische Vereniging voor Radiotherapie-Oncologie, 2017) Award Lectures.

Personal

My father used to say that a job should bring you joy, and I'm fortunate of finding that place where my profession is also my passion (...both a blessing and curse). Finding balance between private and professional life is a challenge indeed, and I'm grateful to have a supportive family. Chris, my life partner, plays a crucial role in helping maintain that balance. Together, we've raised four amazing children who are now embarking on their own journeys in life.

Final statement

My experience serving ESTRO has allowed me to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of our Society, as well as the sensitivities crucial for its progress. In my view, as president, it's vital to rise above individual disciplines, remain open to various perspectives, and represent the voice of the Society. Our greatest strength lies in interdisciplinary collaboration, something we must protect and cherish. ESTRO stands at a pivotal moment and having served as treasurer, I recognize that "business as usual" is no longer an option. The new governance structure provides a unique opportunity for sustainability and facing future challenges. Together, we can guarantee its success, ensuring that every member feels a sense of belonging within ESTRO and contributes to making a positive impact for our patients. Serving as your president would be a true honor.

