



ESTRO SCHOOL COURSE REPORT

RESEARCH MASTERCLASS IN RADIOTHERAPY PHYSICS

3 - 7 September 2015 | Prague, Czech Republic

COURSE DIRECTOR

Ben Heijmen
Head of Medical Physics
Erasmus Medical Centre,
Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

The beginning of September found me in Prague, attending a new ESTRO course, “Research masterclass in radiotherapy physics”. I singled it out from the School calendar for 2015 as a course I had to attend this year. It was the perfect combination of a city I had never visited and a course with an attractive name. The main aim caught my attention: how to turn an initial idea into a successful project with scientific output. All attendees had to submit an idea for a research project or scientific paper and attendance was limited. I was not certain that my idea would be accepted but decided to take a chance and submitted my proposal right on deadline. It turned out that my proposal was accepted and I got to visit Prague for the first time.

We were welcomed by course director Ben Heijmen and introduced to all the faculty members. The course flowed smoothly through project presentations, research and discussions. During the presentations, participants and teachers were divided into three groups. Each project was discussed within the group, questions were raised and suggestions for further improvements given. The teachers assisted and supervised us individually giving advice as we tried to include the new ideas from the feedback into our projects.

A second presentation of the upgraded projects and proposed changes took place before the groups were shuffled so they could be discussed and maybe improved



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further. Some of the projects were given a boost, while others had their research agenda reshaped and methodology improved. The outcome was fantastic and promising. The interactive sessions were engaging and dynamic and the teachers were very supportive and encouraging. They evaluated the quality of the research, ensuring that it was meaningful, timely and useful.

Another source of motivation were the lessons. Current trends in research were pointed out in radiotherapy, brachytherapy, imaging, dosimetry, biophysics and also particle radiotherapy. Important unresolved issues and future research opportunities were discussed. Everyone could find something in one of the inspiring topics. We were also introduced to valuable tips and tricks on writing successful grant proposals and scientific papers. Both were appealing presentations and shared the need for novelty, impact, feasibility and risk. In other words, have good ideas and work hard.

The coffee breaks allowed us as individuals and professionals to exchange information and were a source of professional updating. Over dinner, there were a few beers, a few laughs, a more serious debate and some transfer of information here and there. The social dinner was carefully organised by Laura La Porta, ESTRO Project manager, at Villa Richter, a pleasant restaurant with a perfect view over the “city of a hundred spires”. The chats, the wine, the view, some pictures and giggles all contributed to a lovely and relaxed September night in Prague.



LULZIME DAÇI

The course took place at Hotel Century Old Town, in a unique atmosphere that gave a nod to the heritage of Franz Kafka. His influence was to be found at every corner and the three meeting rooms were named after his fiancée and muses: Milena, Dora and Julie.

He said, "From a certain point onward there is no longer any turning back. That is the point that must be reached". I am sure that this educational event will grow very

significantly in two years, that the process is irreversible and that we will see its impact in the form of published papers and successful research outcomes.

Lulzime Daçi
Medical Physicist
Nordlandssykehuset
Bodø, Norway
lulzime.daci@nordlandssykehuset.no