



# CONFERENCES

## Best Interdisciplinary Award



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### *What does this award mean to you?*

The work that I presented in the awarded abstract, on behalf of the College for Physicians of Radiation Oncology Centers in Belgium, is the result of a long-term collaboration of Belgian radiation oncology professionals with the Belgian Cancer Registry (BCR) and the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI) in Belgium. This coverage-with-evidence development project was initiated in 2013 to guarantee patients early access to stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT), as reimbursement was not granted initially due to a lack of evidence for the Belgian context, both in terms of high-level clinical evidence and economic data. Thanks to the project, reimbursement for SBRT was endorsed in 2020 in Belgium. It is very encouraging to receive a best interdisciplinary abstract award for this type of work, which aims to generate real-life data on innovative radiotherapy interventions or techniques; in other words, the aim is to learn from every patient, which is in line with the theme of the conference.

### *To whom would you like to dedicate your award?*

I would like to dedicate the award to my colleagues in the college, and to my colleagues in the BCR and the NIHDI, because without their support and open-mindedness to set up such a collaborative project, this would not have been possible.

### *What are you proudest of in your career?*

I have taken on different roles in my career. Starting as a clinician, I have gradually grown into more governance positions as Chair of Department and President of the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO), among others. Besides my clinical research interests, to date mainly in thoracic oncology, I have always focused on health-services research, which complemented my role as co-Chair of the ESTRO health economics in radiation oncology (HERO) project. In this capacity, and through many other projects that focused on the availability, access to, and the cost and economics of radiotherapy, I have collaborated with a large group of colleagues, many of whom have become friends. All in all, I think whatever role I took up during my career, the major

incentive was always to bring the best treatment to patients, both at the population level, as in the project presented, or at the individual level, as in my day-to-day interaction with patients and as department chair.

### ***What is your next challenge?***

In the short term, it is important to put this abstract in writing! I am convinced that coverage with evidence development is a strong mechanism to introduce radiotherapy innovation into clinical practice, alongside the more typical path of translational and clinical research, and deserves to become more recognised. I am also strongly convinced that clinical and health-services research should go hand-in-hand to bring the best treatments to patients, and to optimise healthcare. Further substantiation and proof of the value of radiotherapy is definitively what I will focus on in the coming years.

