



CONFERENCES

Best Radiation Therapist (RTT) Award



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What does this award mean to you?

I'm very happy to see that the research work is appreciated in this way. I gain the opportunity to inform other people of the findings through my presentation about dose reductions to organs at risk (OARs) and consequent reductions in toxicity risk in oesophageal proton treatment. This may increase awareness of the benefits of this treatment so that other patients might benefit in the future as well.

To whom would you like to dedicate your award?

To the radiation oncologist Kristel Muijs. She always supported me when I got stuck while writing the abstract. She taught me a lot about how research should be done and the important things to consider.

What is your next challenge?

We seek constantly to improve the treatment plans of those patients whom we treat with proton therapy in our clinic. For me it is a continuous journey to learn from the past, to investigate, improve and finally implement new planning strategies and techniques.

What have been the highlights of your career?

The first highlight was the opportunity to investigate the characteristics of protons and to develop different tumour-specific proton-planning techniques. It was a big challenge to implement new workflows for proton treatment planning for several tumour sites such as those of oesophageal cancer, and it was a pleasure to take part in this.

I gathered together all the experience I gained to create ideas for a research project. The results are described in my abstract, which the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) has awarded the 2022 Best Paper Award for the RTT track. This is one of my greatest achievements.

What started your interest in science?

Throughout my career in radiation oncology, I have enjoyed the evaluation of treatment plans and have sought ways to improve them. I compared many plans, photons vs. protons, and investigated the impact of beam settings and planning objectives on the doses to OARs. I looked in detail at the differences among these plans and wanted to know whether differences in doses to the OARs were dependent on the type of treatment, neo-adjuvant vs. definitive setting. Curiosity is the driving force in my research.

Did your parents encourage you in your career, or would they rather you had done something else?

My parents and partner have always supported me in everything I do and will continue to do so in the future, even though they find it difficult to understand exactly what my work consists of.

When do you think you will retire, and what would you like to do then?

I won't retire for a long time - I'm a workaholic who wants to know in detail how everything works. I have come this far because of my drive and passion for my work.

