



CONFERENCES

Emmanuel van der Schueren award



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What does this award mean to you?

First of all, I must say that I am truly honoured to be awarded the Emmanuel van der Schueren award. It is a privilege to be recognised by peers for what you do. However, both in science and in education, you never do things alone – it is a team effort. At the ESTRO School, nothing would be possible without the combined effort and dedication of teachers, course directors, the EDC and the school staff. I would like to dedicate the award to all of them. Especially during the last 18 months we have witnessed the dedication and flexibility of all involved in the school. It is amazing how all contribute to make the school evolve even under difficult times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is your next challenge?

The current challenge is to bring the school back on track after the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of educational offers and new developments within courses, technology and pedagogies, and to make it economically sustainable again. I guess it will take some years before we are back on track.

What are you proudest of in your career?

What makes me most proud and what makes everything worth it is when we succeed in helping a patient in distress. I feel privileged to be able to help when needed and to make a difference for people. Not all jobs provide you with this opportunity.

What started your interest in science?

As a young trainee I wondered why some tumours responded to radiotherapy while others didn't. Often the primary tumour responded and nodal metastases didn't. A senior colleague at that time introduced me to Jens Overgaard at Aarhus and I was lucky to come under his wing. This complex question remains the focal point of my research.

What has been your involvement within ESTRO?

I have been a member of the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) since 2000, when I came into science as a PhD student. Becoming an ESTRO member was the logical thing to do – congresses and courses were (and are) an important part of my education. I have never regretted that decision.

In 2007 I volunteered as a Danish representative to take part in the revision of the ESTRO core curriculum (which later became the third edition). I became active in this process and was amazed by the way in which people from all over Europe were able to work together and join forces to make things happen. Later, in 2009-10, I joined the FALCON group (an educational ESTRO project devoted to the improvement of the homogeneity in contouring among radiation oncologists), which was established at that time by Vincenzo Valentini (Professor in radiation oncology and Chair of the Radiation Oncology Department at the Gemelli-ART,

Università Cattolica S.Cuore, Rome, Italy). This was a quite innovative idea that turned out to be a success. From there, my involvement continued as ESTRO representative at the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) and as a member of the education and training committee (as it was then called) and of DOVE (the library group). From 2016 I was chair of the ESTRO education council (EDC) and director of the ESTRO School after Richard Pötter, and I became associated to the ESTRO board.

All along, it has been about what we can accomplish when we work together.

