



CONFERENCES

Honorary member award



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What does this award mean to you?

First of all, as a non-radiation oncologist, it came as a surprise. I have always been dedicated to multidisciplinary clinical research, which I discovered at EORTC. It has been an eye opener for me as a young researcher that if a cure can be obtained, it is certainly through loco-regional treatments when the disease is still localised, although these are often underserved clinical situations because of the lack of interest of the commercial sector. Therefore, I have always done my utmost to improve this situation and specifically through our recent partnership with the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO). I take this unexpected award as a sign of recognition of my efforts to promote the discipline within clinical research, although I do not think I have done much. I am very thankful to ESTRO.

What have been the highlights of your career?

There have been many highlights in my professional journey, on both human and scientific levels. Indeed, working at the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) provides constant exposure to so many different people and points of view. It is a rich and constantly renewed life experience with no routine; that's probably why I am still here after so many years. Let me point to two main highlights of my career that are more specifically related to radiation oncology. The first has been my active involvement in the temozolomide radiotherapy trial with Roger Stupp (professor in neurological surgery at Northwestern University, Illinois, USA) and Rene Mirimanoff (emeritus professor at the University of Lausanne faculty of medicine, Switzerland), which established a new and still current standard-of-care for gliomas. The second highlight was that, with Vincent Gregoire (head of the radiation oncology department at the Léon Bérard Cancer Center, Lyon, France) and based on the quality assurance review of the HeadSTART protocol, we convinced the EORTC Board that radiotherapy quality assurance should become an integral risk-based programme for all radiation oncology trials at EORTC. Since then, it has been a standard at EORTC.

What has been your involvement within ESTRO?

EORTC has always fostered partnerships with all stakeholders and specifically with oncology societies. Things are too complex in Europe for a single organisation to achieve optimal therapeutic progress alone. The solutions for patients require multiple and varying expertise. Therefore, it was simply natural for EORTC and ESTRO to identify shared challenges and to bring their respective expertise together to address them. I have done my utmost to help this partnership to succeed and deliver through our shared programme EORTC-ESTRO radiation infrastructure for Europe (E2-RADlatE). It has been, I want to believe, quite a successful enterprise when we consider the enthusiasm of the radiation oncology community to contribute to the programme and its downstream projects. ESTRO and EORTC reported during the conference on OLIGOCare, one of the downstream cohorts that addresses oligometastatic cancer patients.

What do you do in your spare time?

My spare time is limited, but I am a jogging addict and now that the kids are gradually leaving the nest, my wife and I are trying to enjoy more art and culture, especially paintings.

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

Well, I will retire at the legal age to receive my pension; there are still a few years to go, even if the countdown is now under 10 years! There are a few things that are waiting for me. First, I would like to return to a couple of languages that I learned in my younger days, refresh and improve them and then return to the related cultures that one can discover alongside travel and readings. Nature is important and I will try actively to support actions dedicated to wildlife and the environment. Sport and of course family time will also take a larger part of my spare time than they do now.

