



CONFERENCES

Jens Overgaard Legacy Award



Birgitte Vrou Offersen

Department of Clinical Medicine
Department of Experimental Clinical Oncology
Aarhus University
Aarhus, Denmark

What does this award mean to you?

I feel privileged to receive this award from one of the most important international societies in the field of radiation oncology, the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO). It is a great honour to have this international recognition for the work done in clinical trials and guideline development.

To whom would you like to dedicate your award?

I would like to dedicate this award to the DBCG radiotherapy committee, members of which helped a lot with the trials, from the development of the ideas to the inclusion of patients in the trials and, ultimately, interpretation of the results. I also dedicate this award to Jens Overgaard for being a constant inspiration to me and helping me to put research and life into perspective.

What have been the highlights of your career?

Meeting Professor Overgaard in 1992 was a turning point into science for me. Then, changes in the Danish national standards of breast cancer therapy were highlights; the introduction of standards for moderately hypofractionated breast radiotherapy for the residual breast in 2014, for partial breast irradiation in 2016, and for loco-regional breast radiotherapy in 2021. These changes were based on the first results from the Danish Breast Cancer Group (DBCG) Hypo trial, the DBCG partial-breast irradiation trial and the DBCG Skagen trial 1. The results were achieved through collaboration among Danish and international radiation therapy departments, and the trials could only be conducted because many staff members (doctors, nurses, radiation therapists and physicists) put a lot of effort into doing a huge amount of work.

What has been your involvement within ESTRO?

ESTRO has played a pivotal role in my career for more than a decade, because I have found most of my international friends in research and clinical work through ESTRO. I was extremely lucky to be involved as faculty in the ESTRO teaching courses on breast cancer radiation therapy from their beginning, and that stimulated various developments such as an international consensus on target volume delineation. Further, I am editor of the breast cancer section of the Green Journal.

What started your interest in science?

My science interest started in 1992 during a one-week stay in the Department of Oncology in Aarhus as a medical student. My study companion and I knocked on Jens Overgaard's door, and since that day Professor Overgaard has been my mentor. I started research on angiogenesis, immunohistochemistry and translational research, which were not at all related to radiation. My scientific interest in radiation therapy was stimulated much later, so I attended my first ESTRO conference in Gothenburg in 2008.

