



CONFERENCES

phiRO poster award



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What does this award mean to you?

I am honoured and grateful to be the recipient of this phiRO (Physics and Imaging in Radiation Oncology journal) young investigator prize. It can be hard for me to accept praise and compliments, so this experience is also helping me to embrace feeling good and showing off a bit! I hope to use the energy this award has given me to inspire radiation therapists (RTTs) to be involved in research alongside daily clinical practice.

To whom would you like to dedicate your award?

I would like to dedicate this award to my colleagues Petra van Houdt, Robin Navest, Marlies Nowee and Uulke van der Heide. Thank you for the great cooperation and the faith you have in me.

What is your next challenge?

Within our research group we are working towards the use of biological image-guided adaptive radiotherapy. Daily functional imaging on a magnetic resonance linear accelerator (MR-linac) provides the opportunity to measure changes in tumour biology during treatment. We are now at a point where we can start to collect the data to investigate the clinical relevance of these techniques for adaptive treatments. However, the key to success of a response biomarker is that the measurements are accurate and precise over time. Our next step is to integrate the technical validation of various functional imaging techniques in clinical trials.

What do you think are the next challenges for RTTs?

With all the developments within radiotherapy, for example the introduction of the MR-linac, the role of the RTT is changing. There is a great opportunity for us to expand our range of tasks and responsibilities, such as online target delineation, and online re-planning and analysis of (functional) MR images. By migrating the tasks from the radiation oncologist or medical physicist to an RTT-led treatment, the radiotherapy treatment chain should also become more time efficient.

What started your interest in science?

My interest in science arose during my career as an RTT. When an MR-linac was purchased in our department, I found it extremely interesting to be involved from the start. The implementation of the MR-linac, including setting up workflows and the development and testing of MR sequences for different target areas was a great challenge. In addition to the anatomical sequences, we can also acquire quantitative MRI data on the MR-linac for different tumour sites for research purposes. By involving RTTs in the acquisition

and analysis of these images, clinical practice and research become connected. I think this is important to improve research on relevant clinical issues. I would like to contribute to the improvement of these techniques to enable use of more personalised treatments in the future.

What do you do in your spare time?

Together with my boyfriend we have started a publishing company. We focus on publishing personal stories. It is very special to guide people to turn their stories into a book. I also love to cook and eat good food. Healthy and surprising meals (including breakfasts) are my speciality.

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

My retirement is still a long way off. I love to travel, and I have already visited many countries in the world. But South Africa, Japan and Patagonia are still on my wish-list. I do not intend to wait until I retire before I visit these countries. But after my retirement I want to make longer trips and enjoy all the beautiful things the world has to offer.

