



# YOUNG

## Introducing a new young ESTRO (yESTRO) committee member: Amanda Webster

### What is your current position?

I am a radiation therapist (RTT). My role is split; I am a research and development specialist RTT at University College London (UCL), UK; I am undertaking my Cancer Research UK RadNet City of London funded PhD with UCL Hospital, and I support the national radiotherapy trials quality assurance (RTTQA) group.

### What is your educational background?

In 2012 I graduated with a BSc in radiation therapy from Trinity College Dublin in Ireland. I then worked clinically as an RTT and became a senior RTT after I had gained some experience. I had the pleasure of working in the Edinburgh Cancer Centre (Scotland, UK), and at Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital and The Royal Marsden, both in London, UK. As a senior RTT, I felt ready to return to further education, while I continued to work full-time. I completed my MSc in advanced radiotherapy practice and started working for the national RTTQA group. I worked full-time for the RTTQA for a couple of years, and then I transitioned to a more clinical role as research and development lead RTT at Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital. Following a fulfilling year, I embarked on my current role as a research and development specialist RTT and PhD student. I am in the third year of my PhD, which is titled "Motion mitigation for abdominal cancers".

### What is your area of research?

First, I am an advocate for RTTs being involved in and leading on research. As a research and development specialist RTT, I am passionate about getting all keen RTTs involved in research, within my department and beyond. I believe that RTTs should be involved in all aspects of research, from designing and developing research studies to undertaking their own research. Given their unique position as the bridge between technology and patients, RTTs can not only enhance the technical aspects of radiotherapy planning and delivery, but also significantly impact the overall patient experience. This belief naturally affects the research that I undertake. For the past few years, I have focused my research on improving the technical delivery of radiotherapy with a view to improving patient outcomes. My current PhD research is focused on motion mitigation for abdominal cancers, and I have the opportunity to analyse the technical planning and delivery during the use of motion mitigation equipment, while including the patient perspective. I am very fortunate to be able to use my research skills as an RTT and to contribute to national and international clinical trials in my RTTQA role.

### How long have you been an ESTRO member?

I have been an ESTRO member since 2012.

### What role has ESTRO played in your career?

ESTRO has played an important role in influencing my career as an RTT. My first experience with ESTRO was in 2012, when I submitted my BSc dissertation as an abstract. It was accepted in the form of a poster, which was really exciting for an undergraduate RTT student. For a couple of years after that, I had little engagement with ESTRO; I was busy training and gaining my competency as a qualified RTT. However, when I felt ready, I re-engaged and attended the course on quantitative methods in radiation oncology. This was a great opportunity to reconnect with the ESTRO community and to attend one of its fantastic education offerings. As I grew professionally, the next natural step for me was to submit my work to the ESTRO congress. It came as a huge surprise to me to gain an award for the highest scoring RTT abstract in the highlights of proffered papers award lecture in 2019, for my abstract entitled "Implementation of plan-of-the-day adaptive radiotherapy: compliance to guidelines". This was such a brilliant opportunity to present my work and a huge boost to my confidence. Since then I have continued to submit and present my work at the annual congress, which is an event I would highly recommend for any early career professionals!

I was introduced to the broad world of radiation oncology at an ESTRO annual conference. The insights I gained from the presentations and the connections I made there were invaluable. The courses offered by the ESTRO School equipped me with knowledge at both the foundation level and regarding advanced techniques; this knowledge ensured that I was always at the forefront of our rapidly evolving field. The Society's commitment to research opened doors for me to collaborate on multicentre studies and to push the boundaries of what we know and can achieve in radiation oncology. In essence, my affiliation with ESTRO has not only enriched my knowledge and skills but has also provided me with a community that champions excellence and innovation in patient care.

## **What ESTRO activities have you been involved in so far? And in the future, are there some specific missions within the Society that you would like to participate in?**

One of my first ESTRO activities involved me shamelessly putting myself forward to be involved in a questionnaire about surface-guided radiotherapy (SGRT) practice patterns. I noticed an email from the "3rd Physics Workshop: Science in Development", which addressed SGRT, and I emailed to ask if they had enough RTTs involved. They didn't and I was fortunate enough to join the working party. Naturally, I had a lovely time collaborating with the team but I also learned that, if you see an initiative don't be afraid to put yourself forward and ask if there is an opportunity to get involved. Then I applied to join the yESTRO committee and was interviewed. This was really exciting as I felt that I had become a full part of ESTRO. My first task for the committee was to oversee the young track for 2023 with Daan Nevens and to co-organise the RTT track. I am continuing with support for the 2024 congress; I am co-organising the young track for 2024 and inputting into the interdisciplinary track. I also oversee the yESTRO opinion panel with Jolien Heukelom. This is a fantastic initiative to enable us to engage with yESTRO members, establish what is important to them and get them involved in ESTRO initiatives. I also review for *tipsRO* and *phiRO*.

I would love to see an increased focus on patients in ESTRO. We were fortunate to have an RTT and patient, Professor Heidi Probst, share her journey by speaking in the young track in 2023. Hers was a powerful presentation and led to there being no dry eyes in the audience. We received amazing feedback from attendees, such as it having been the best session they had attended and how it had reminded them why we do what we do. I hope to see more initiatives such as this in the future.

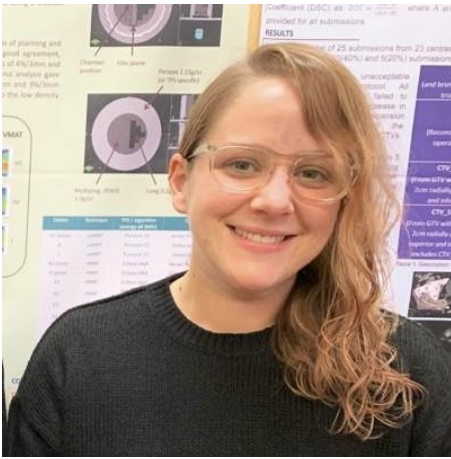
## **Why did you want to join the committee?**

I am passionate about giving space to all members of the radiation oncology multidisciplinary team. It is important to me that, regardless of background level or experience, all voices are heard. This makes yESTRO a natural fit for me. This committee, to me, is a unique space where I can actively shape the future of radiation oncology. I aspire to bridge the gap between experienced experts and emerging professionals, ensuring that the latter receive from the former the mentorship, training, and opportunities they require to develop. I believe firmly that fresh perspectives and innovative ideas from young professionals play vital roles in advancing our field. I aim to amplify their voices through my participation in the yESTRO committee and to ensure that these young RTTs have a pivotal influence on the direction and decisions of our esteemed Society.

## **Why would you recommend to students and young radiation oncology professionals that they become members of ESTRO?**

For aspiring professionals and students delving into the realm of radiation oncology, I must underscore the tremendous value that joining ESTRO offers. In my journey, ESTRO has boosted my career, as it has offered a wealth of knowledge, networking opportunities, and avenues for professional development. Members unlock access to a diverse range of educational resources; some of the best in our field deliver the content. The annual conferences are more than mere presentations; they serve as platforms from which attendees can forge connections, exchange experiences, and draw inspiration from the pioneers of our field. Moreover, ESTRO's unwavering dedication to research and innovation guarantees that we stay abreast of the latest advances. Beyond the tangible perks, being a part of ESTRO means becoming immersed in a community that is deeply committed to excellence and patient care. For those who are serious about creating a successful and impactful career in radiation oncology, I believe that ESTRO membership is an indispensable stride toward realising this ambition.





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