



YOUNG

New yESTRO committee member: Jolien Heukelom

What is your current position? I work at The Netherlands Cancer Institute, where I combine research and clinical training. I am in the fourth year of the residency programme and I expect to become a radiation oncologist at the end of 2020 or early in 2021. I hope to defend my thesis later this year.

What is your educational background? I am a medical doctor.

What is your area of research? Radiotherapy for head and neck cancer, and especially the trade-off between cure and toxicity.

How long have you been a member of the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO)? I have been an ESTRO member since 2012, when I first started to work in the field of radiation oncology.

What role has ESTRO played in your career? I have had the privilege to be awarded combined ESTRO and Adaptive and innovative Radiation Treatment FOR improving Cancer patients' treatment outcome (ARTFORCE) travel grants, both in 2012 and 2013. Those small successes early in my career encouraged me to apply for grants more often. I am grateful for those early awards and ultimately for grants I received that allowed me to go to the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, to do part of my PhD research there. This experience has had a great impact on my personal and professional development. I made a lot of friends in Houston, both in the hospital and in the sailing team I was in. I've sailed in Dutch races with my Houston teammates. Also, the research I performed there in 2014 has led to further collaborative efforts and multiple publications. Furthermore, I participated in the AGORA meeting in 2016 and the Foundations of Leadership course in 2018. Through both of these activities I have been able to meet colleagues from different disciplines and countries. To me, this is a very nice way to broaden my view, and to learn from others.

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? I have been to several ESTRO annual conferences and have had the privilege to attend two ESTRO courses. A couple of years ago, I took part in a mini-symposium at ESTRO, in which researchers who worked on similar topics joined in a discussion on that particular subject. I thought that really added value to my visit to the conference. Regarding the future, I am honoured by the invitation to chair the YoungTrack for the annual ESTRO conference in 2020.

Why did you want to join the Committee? I guess the answer to this question is twofold. There is personal motivation: learning about radiation oncology in different institutes and countries, and meeting colleagues from Europe etc. There is a more altruistic reason, too: I have been able to participate in many ESTRO activities and I am enthusiastic to do something in return. I enjoy dedicating part of my time to the Society, especially to the involvement of its young members.

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

ESTRO has a lot to offer. For instance, it has educational opportunities in abundance: through the website, the conferences and live courses. In addition, it is a great way to get to know others in the field. I think fulfilment in life - or at least some part of happiness in life - often is related to a high job satisfaction. This is easier when you know nice people doing similar things. You can meet them at ESTRO!



Jolien Heukelom

The Netherlands Cancer Institute
Amsterdam, The Netherlands