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My way into ESTRO

Like many of us, I was first attracted by the world-leading education of the ESTRO School. In 2008, I was invited as a teacher to the course “Image-Guided Radiotherapy”. This course showed me the spirit of ESTRO: multi-professional teamwork creating an atmosphere of excitement to bring latest science and best radiation-oncology practice to our patients.

Background in the ESTRO society

I became especially involved in the ESTRO school: since 2008 as teacher for the course “Image-Guided and Adaptive Radiotherapy in Clinical Practice” and 2010 to 2011 for the international course “Advanced Technologies”. In 2012, Prof. D. Verellen and myself established as Co-Directors the annual course “Clinical Practice and Implementation of Image-Guided Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy”. Since 2016, I am member of the Scientific Board of our Green Journal. I was elected to serve on the ESTRO board in 2016 and since then I also serve in the ESTRO Scientific Council. Immediately after my start in Zurich in 2014, my Department became ESTRO institutional member to support our society and simultaneously our next generation in their scientific and professional development.

A short curriculum vitae

After medical studies in Würzburg (Germany), Los Angeles (US) and Brisbane (Australia), I spent my residency and most of my time as a consultant at the Department of Radiation Oncology (Prof. M. Flentje), University Hospital Würzburg. After a research fellowship at the Institute of Cancer Research UK and the Royal Marsden Hospital London (Prof. M. Brada), I was promoted to Associate Professor (W2 Professor) in 2010 and became Vice-Chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University Hospital Würzburg. In 2014, I was appointed as Chairman and Full Professor at the University Hospital Zurich (Switzerland) and since 2017 I also chair the Imaging Department of the University Hospital Zurich. At the University of Zurich, I currently serve as Vice Dean for our Master of Medical Studies.

Together with my family, we have found our new home in Zurich. My wife works as clinician at the University of Zurich. The valuable time outside of work is almost exclusively dedicated to our three kids: 8 years, 7 years and 11 months old.

Scientific achievements

My scientific heart is mainly located at the interface of medical-physics and clinical research. Areas of interest are image-guided radiotherapy, radiomics and stereotactic radiotherapy – or more generally speaking development, implementation and clinical evaluation of advanced radiotherapy technologies. I consider this as translational research with partners from physics, robotics and IT. My clinical focus is lung cancer and oligo-metastatic disease.

Research has been published in >230 pubmed listed manuscripts with an h-index of 42. Most research has been performed in the framework of inter-professional projects and international collaborations; the work has been awarded nationally (Hermann-Holthusen

Award; Koester Award) and internationally (ESTRO Accuray Award). One patent has been granted for a novel method of breathing motion compensation, two other patents are pending for approval.

Qualification for the ESTRO Board

What makes me a suitable candidate for the ESTRO Board? I have served for many years and at many positions within ESTRO: as teacher, course-director, member of the task group on quality management, member of the Green Journal Editorial board and member of the ESTRO Board and Scientific Council. My academic life - in research and teaching - is characterized by multi-professional teamwork performed within multi-institutional and international projects. Having worked in three very different health care systems – Germany, Switzerland and the UK – I gained valuable experiences to understand current and future challenges of a European society.

Motivation to join in the ESTRO Board, again

After having served on the ESTRO board for three years, I have felt the responsibilities and I have also realized the time resources, which are required for this important position. I have taken the decision to run for a second term seriously, being convinced that I can contribute in several relevant aspects. (1) I had the possibility to be part of team that developed our new ESTRO vision "Radiation oncology. Optimal health for all, together": I want to contribute filling this vision with life, which is the difficult part of a vision statement. (2) ESTRO has always been strong in science dissemination (conferences, journals, education): I am convinced ESTRO could strengthen itself and our profession by using its unique structure and resources to be more actively involved in science generation such as the ESTRO-EORTC E2-RADIatE project. (3) Guidelines are becoming ever more important, influencing daily patient care. ESTRO needs to continue and simultaneously further develop its guideline strategy: continue generating highest-quality Radiation Oncology specific guidelines and further develop the guideline initiatives to closest international and interdisciplinary collaboration, e.g. with ASTRO or ESMO. (4) Our ESTRO society is currently in an excellent position, but there are many challenges on the horizon e.g. financially (investment planning), onco-politically (relationship to surgical and medical oncology societies): a deep understanding of our multi-professional society, interprofessional patient care and the international oncological network is required continue the success story of ESTRO. (5) I want to contribute to strengthen ESTRO for the future in particularly by ensuring our society is most attractive and open for the younger generation: this includes the ESTRO school with its teaching activities, conferences, governing bodies and journals and all other activities.

Candidate Statement

I strongly believe that cancer care requires as closest as possible inter-disciplinary strategies and collaboration. However, I am simultaneously convinced that we independently and strongly need to further develop our discipline, the "handcraft" or "art" of Radiation Oncology, to bring the best only into multi-modality cancer treatment. This is my mission in my scientific career and my goal as Chairman of a Department for Radiation Oncology. And this will be the mission I will dedicate myself to as member of the ESTRO Board.