In memoriam Dirk J. Kwekkeboom (1958 - 2017)

Dirk J. Kwekkeboom, MD, widely regarded as one of Europe’s foremost experts on peptide receptor radiotherapy (PRRT), passed away March 8, 2017, at the age of 58.

Beloved by all and affectionately known as Dik, he was just appointed Professor of Nuclear Medicine at the Erasmus University in 2016. Dik was a member of the Advisory Boards of both the European Neuroendocrine Tumor Society (ENETS) and the North American Neuroendocrine Tumors Society (NANETS).

Dik received his MD from the University of Amsterdam in 1985. Subsequently, he started his scientific career in the group of Steven Lamberts in the Sector of Endocrinology of the Department of Internal Medicine at the Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, the Netherlands. In 1989, he received his PhD on his studies on clinically nonfunctioning and gonadotroph pituitary adenomas at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. He joined the group of Eric Krenning in the Department of Nuclear Medicine at the Erasmus MC in 1990. He would continue working in this Department for the rest of his too short life. At the start of Dik’s career, the Department was involved in the development of somatostatin receptor scintigraphy (SRS) for somatostatin-receptor bearing tumors. In 1991, Indium-111-pentetreotide was introduced for SRS and Dik was responsible for the cost-benefit analyses. In 1992, the first PRRT using Indium-111-pentetreotide was performed. Yttrium-90-labelled somatostatin analogues were subsequently introduced. From 2000 onwards, mainly Lutetium-177-DOTA-octreotate was used. As head of the Lu-PRRT team, Dik was involved in the Lutetium-177-DOTA-octreotate PRRT of more than 1500 patients. These patients were referred from all over the world.

Over the years, Dik was responsible for the training of nuclear medicine physicians. His excellent educational skills also resulted in Dik being invited to many national and international postgraduate and educational courses. He was involved in almost all guidelines and/or state-of-the-art papers in the PRRT field. He was also the head of a very active research group. The scientific production by Dik is
tremendous and of great importance. It adds up to approximately 31 original papers, 33 reviews and 8
guidelines co-authored by Dik on the subject of PRRT. Dik’s approach to scientific conduct was usually
accompanied by sharp remarks and mostly by a good joke. He used humor to mentor and guide.

One of Dik’s last important scientific contributions was his support of the NETTER-1 trial, which was

Dik was a lover of classical music. He almost never missed the world-famous Gergiev Festival of the
Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. He loved reading books and was the proud owner of the collection of
Russian literature amongst many other books by renown international writers. Dik loved good food and
especially good wine. He was a true connoisseur.

Dik was predeceased in 2008 by his partner Peter and in 1989 by his sister Tien and he is survived by his
sisters Nelie and An, and by his brother Jaap.