

## Dirk J. Kwekkeboom (1958–2017)

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*We only live, only suspire  
Consumed by either fire or fire*  
—T.S. Eliot

**D**irk J. Kwekkeboom, one of world's leading experts on peptide receptor radionuclide therapy (PRRT), sadly passed away on March 8, 2017, at the age of 58, during the time that his article for this supplement was being prepared. In the field of radionuclide diagnosis and treatment of neuroendocrine tumors, Dirk (known to all as Dik) achieved the highest of goals with consideration to his career, scientific production, and position in the most important scientific societies. He was a member of the advisory boards of both the European Neuroendocrine Tumor Society and the North American Neuroendocrine Tumor Society.

Dik earned his MD degree at the University of Amsterdam in 1985. Subsequently, he started his scientific career within the group of Steven Lamberts in the endocrinology sector of the Department of Internal Medicine at Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam. In 1989, he received his PhD from Erasmus University Rotterdam for his studies on clinically nonfunctioning and gonadotroph pituitary adenomas. In 1990, he joined the group of Eric Krenning in the Department of Nuclear Medicine at Erasmus Medical Center, and he was appointed professor of nuclear medicine in 2015. He remained there until the end of his prematurely interrupted life.

At the start of Dik's career, the department was involved in the development of somatostatin receptor scintigraphy for somatostatin receptor-positive tumors. In 1991, when  $^{111}\text{In}$ -pentetreotide was introduced into clinical practice, Dik conducted the seminal cost-benefit analysis that established the position of somatostatin receptor scintigraphy within the diagnostic algorithm for neuroendocrine tumors. In 1992, the group performed the first PRRT study using  $^{111}\text{In}$ -pentetreotide. A few years later,  $^{90}\text{Y}$ -labeled somatostatin analogues were introduced into clinical trials. However, starting in 2000,  $^{177}\text{Lu}$ -octreotate was the agent mainly used because of its more manageable safety and efficacy characteristics. Dik was the first to introduce  $^{177}\text{Lu}$ -octreotate into clinical trials and then into routine practice. As the head of the  $^{177}\text{Lu}$ -PRRT team at Erasmus Medical Center, Dik was involved in the  $^{177}\text{Lu}$ -octreotate treatment of more than 1,500 patients, who had been

referred not only from The Netherlands but from all over the world.

Dik displayed brilliant skill in the training of nuclear medicine physicians and was invited to teach many national and international postgraduate and educational courses. He was involved in the development of almost all guidelines and state-of-the-art papers in the field of PRRT. Dik's remarkable body of scientific work is considered a reference point in the field and amounts to more than 200 peer-reviewed papers, of which those in the field of PRRT include 31 original research papers, 33 reviews, and 8 guidelines. One of Dik's final important scientific contributions was his work on the NETTER-1 trial, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in January 2017.

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

Dik was known for his wit, scientific rationalism, humor, and care for the essential. The direct and concise style that he put into research, as well as into his writings and conversation, was a standard against which the divagations of pseudo-research fall short.

He was a cultivated person. He loved classical music. I remember him weeping while he listened to the beauty and perfection of Maria Callas' voice. He also loved the intensity of Russian literature; his eyes would sparkle when he spoke of Dostoevsky. His love for beauty and excellence certainly influenced his approach to science and to life in general—his home had a most sophisticated architectural style; he enjoyed good food and good wine.

He will be missed.



**Dirk J. Kwekkeboom**