



CONFERENCES

Lifetime achievement award



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What have been the highlights of your career?

- My early education and training in radiation oncology with exceptional mentors (Jose Otero, now associate professor at The Ohio State University College of Medicine, USA; Michael Peckham and Luther Brady, now professor at Drexel University College of Medicine, USA).
- The development of intraoperative electron radiotherapy, in the context of multidisciplinary oncology practice, as a transverse, super-precise option for optimised dosimetry; in this I worked shoulder-to-shoulder with exceptional colleagues (Antonio Brugarolas, director of oncology at USP Hospital San Jaime, Torrevieja, Spain; Jose Luis Garcia-Sabrido, department of general surgery, Hospital General Universitario Gregorio Marañón, Madrid, Spain).
- The design and implementation of a pioneering, hospital-based proton therapy project in Spain, of strong academic identity, with an exceptional multi-professional institutional team-approach (Gomez Cantero, Azcona, Lilly).

What is your next challenge?

- To refine technology for intraoperative radiotherapy with electron beams: to improve its use to make it more patient-friendly and to boost the scientific standards of the instruments.
- To contribute to the development of ultra-fast, high dose (FLASH) therapy in clinical intra-surgical scenarios.
- To investigate the differential impact of proton and photon dosimetry (in order to reduce the use of unnecessary radiation in practice) on human immunosoma.

What do you think are the next challenges for radiation oncologists?

In my opinion, there is a common challenge regarding the multi-professional activities that are required in quality-driven radiotherapy and oncology processes: the need for integrative knowledge from innovative thinking. Medical science changes fast; professionals who are involved in patient care should be alert to select the best opportunities to improve their “bedside manner” (using the old, but wonderful, expression...).

What does this award mean to you?

A pause of reflection: a feeling of immense gratitude to my colleagues and co-workers for their generous help and loyalty, together with a profound love and affection for those who walked close to me on the journey, sharing challenges, mistakes and happiness. This award is a particular caress from my European SocieTy for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) friends.

To whom would you like to dedicate your award?

No question: this recognition is dedicated to my patients, their families and relatives. I am a clinician. I wake up every day to try to help patients (among other duties...). They are my heroes. They deserve all the credit for making us (doctors and all clinical professionals) better people. I give it back to them immediately.

What has been your involvement within ESTRO?

In the early days of ESTRO I tried to help to expand the membership and activities of the Society among the community of radiation oncologists in Spain. Later I was involved in the activities of the educational committee and ESTRO School, participating in several teaching courses and other initiatives. I have always enjoyed being in the abstract review group for annual meetings. In the last five years, I have co-coordinated the task force for intraoperative radiotherapy of the ESTRO Advisory Committee for Radiation Oncology Practice (ACROP), and we have completed several guidelines. I have been a member of the editorial board of the green journal since the 1980s. ESTRO has been part of my life, but I have received more from ESTRO than I have given. In 2011, I was awarded the Emmanuel van der Schueren award, and since then I have been in deep debt to the ESTRO community.

Did your parents encourage you in your career, or would they rather you had done something else?

My father was a brilliant scientist; he was a professor of metallurgy. He obtained his PhD degree at Cambridge in the mid-1950s. At that time, I was a baby, but I keep good pictures and remember family anecdotes to document this period. My mother was a saint; she was always working hard, she had a sweet smile and was very concerned with all the dangers of life around us. My father was the one who suggested that I should become a physician. I was interested in biology but I felt uncomfortable about caring for sick people. My father said: "Felipe, if you like medicine why don't you try?" Those words remain mysterious to me today but they changed my life.

What are you proudest of in your career?

My wife and my family. Marta is unique. A significant part of my career is due to her intelligence, sincere heart, luminous smile, big blue eyes and lively personality. Together we have grown and we help others to grow.

What do you do in your spare time?

I spend time being a father (lately grandpa): talking, talking, talking, being available and helping when needed. Trekking, reading, writing. Paying attention to nature and friends. I am a follower of Atletico Madrid football club. I think about how to change the world.

When do you think you will retire, and what would you like to do then?

In four years. I would like to write essays on social change and the opportunities we have to adapt and improve the quality of life of humans. Perhaps I would like to get involved in politics. I know that I will be involved in the promotion of improved life for children and adolescents with neurocognitive dysfunction (particularly those who have Down syndrome), perhaps more as a volunteer than as president of the Fundación Talita-Madrid as I am now (please, ESTRO friends, help me with this marvellous project).

