

# Ben Slotman: bringing advances in radiation oncology to the clinic is fulfilling

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## Expert's introduction

Prof. Ben Slotman (*Figure 1*) received his MD [1985] and PhD [1990] both cum laude at the VU University in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He was registered as radiation oncologist in 1994. In 1998 he was appointed full professor of Radiation Oncology and Chair of the department at VU University. Since 2005 he is also chairman of one of the six divisions of the University Medical Center and co-director of the Cancer Center Amsterdam (VUMC CCA). Ben Slotman is board member of the International Society of Radiosurgery (ISRS), past president of the American Radium Society, and president-elect of the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO). He has (co)-authored about 300 peer-reviewed publications and coordinated a number of trials, including the EORTC study on PCI in ES-SCLC and the C-REST trial on the role of thoracic irradiation in these patients. His further research activities are concentrated on intra- and extracranial stereotactic radiotherapy and the introduction of new technologies in radiotherapy, most recently stereotactic MRI-guided and adaptive radiotherapy (SMART).

## Editor's note

The 10<sup>th</sup> Shanghai International Conference on Radiation Oncology will be held during August 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Shanghai, China. The conference will be attended by numerous internationally renowned experts, devoting much attention to thoracic tumor radiotherapy and covering dozens of international academic researches.

In advance of the meeting, the Editorial Office of *Precision Cancer Medicine* is honored to interview Prof. Ben Slotman via email with an aim to not only share his knowledge and stories among the peers across the world, but also to bring better understanding regarding the developments in the field of thoracic tumor radiotherapy.



**Figure 1** Ben Slotman—Professor and Chairman, Department of Radiation Oncology, VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

## Interview

**PCM:** *In your view, how stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) differs from conventional therapy?*

**Prof. Slotman:** SBRT differs from conventional radiotherapy by the use of very high biological doses, delivered in just a few (typically 3 or 5) fractions. This can be done due to the very steep dose gradient, where the surrounding normal tissues receive a low dose and the high precision by which the treatment is given.

**PCM:** *Could you tell us about advances and challenges in SBRT for lung cancer?*

**Prof. Slotman:** SBRT for patients with early stage lung cancer who cannot be operated due to their general condition nowadays receive SBRT as their standard

treatment. Tumor control is much better than with conventional radiotherapy and the treatment has almost no side effects. For patients with larger tumors or very centrally located tumors, the risk of side effects is larger, and treatment schemes which are a bit more fractionated (e.g., 8–12 fractions) are preferred. The excellent results in medically inoperable patients have led to the question whether SBRT can also be an alternative to surgery. Non-randomized studies show very promising results, but the results of randomized trials need to be awaited, especially in patients with a standard operative risk.

**PCM:** *You have worked in the field of Radiation Oncology for more than 25 years. What sparked your interest in this field?*

**Prof. Slotman:** It's the combination of technical work and caring for patient during a very difficult period of their life. Besides, there have been tremendous developments in the field and being on the forefront in bringing them to the clinic is also very satisfying.

**PCM:** *As member or chairman of numerous international committees within ESTRO, ASTRO, ASCO, IASLC, ISRS, RSS and ARS. Is there a particular achievement you are most proud of in your career so far?*

**Prof. Slotman:** First of all, it's important to realize that these achievements are all team work. I was very much honored when I became honorary fellow of the ACR, but also serving as President of an organization (last year ARS, soon ESTRO) can be very rewarding

**PCM:** *What you would like to do in the upcoming years both in life and in work?*

**Prof. Slotman:** In the next few years, I will be very busy with the integration of the large departments of the two Amsterdam Universities and within ESTRO. In my free time, I will enjoy being with family and friends, workout in

the gym as often as I can, and travel the world to discover new places.

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