

OBITUARY

Bert Eikelboom



On August 24, 2018, Professor Dr. Bernardus Cornelis (Bert) Eikelboom, Professor of Vascular and Transplantation Surgery at the University Medical Centre Utrecht, died at the age of 71. Bert was born in Weesp on January 4, 1947, the son of a general practitioner. After graduating from grammar school, he studied medicine in Utrecht and later fulfilled his surgical training at the Sint Antonius Hospital in Nieuwegein. His scientific quality was already apparent during his surgical training, when he investigated the functioning of the circle of Willis by means of ocular pneumoplethysmography. He defended his PhD thesis "Evaluation of carotid artery disease and potential collateral circulation by ocular pneumoplethysmography" with honours in 1981. In 1990, he was appointed Professor of Vascular and Transplant Surgery at Utrecht University.

Bert realised early on in his career that the omnipotent surgeon's day was over and that superspecialisation would benefit the quality of patient care. Using one of his motto's "Let your curiosity be greater than your fear", he undertook many initiatives that are now commonplace, but which at that time were highly innovative. He initiated the first hybrid operating room in the Netherlands and established the Vascular Centre Utrecht, a one stop shop for vascular patients, a combined consultation with all vascular disease specialists, which was a novelty in 1991. Understandably, his inaugural lecture that year was entitled "Fading Boundaries". In January 1994, his team carried out the first EVAR in the Netherlands at the UMCU. In 1980, Bert was one of the founding fathers of the Dutch Society for Vascular Surgery, and a few years later, the European Society for Vascular Surgery; he was President of both and later appointed honorary member.

Unfortunately, shortly after his appointment as Professor, he was diagnosed with a chronic illness that made it impossible for him to perform surgery. In 1998 he resigned as head of department and in 2002 he retired early. In Bert, the European Vascular community has lost a wonderful, very inspirational, kind, and driven colleague, and will continue to remember him with great respect.

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Vascular Surgery
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