

In memoriam Steven Boonen

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Professor Steven Boonen, MD PhD passed away suddenly on May 20, 2013 in Lisbon, Portugal at only 50 years of age. Steven will be greatly missed, not only as an active and valued scientist, teacher and physician but, most of all, as a well-loved and highly respected colleague and friend of all those working in bone science.

Steven Boonen was Professor of Clinical Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine at the Leuven University Faculty of Medicine (Belgium); Head of the Gerontology and Geriatrics

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Section of the Leuven University Department of Experimental Medicine; Head of the Leuven University Hospital Division of Geriatric Medicine; Director of the Leuven University Hospital Center for Metabolic Bone Diseases; and Senior Clinical Investigator of the National Fund for Scientific Research.

As a director of his clinical department, Steven was respected as a good organizer. He cared for all his collaborators, was interested in their personal stories, and prepared to extend support when needed. Steven was a mentor of many PhD students, and as a motivated researcher and teacher he contributed to their enthusiasm. This resulted in such specific research domains as male osteoporosis, osteoporosis treatment in the oldest old, exploration of hormonal pathways in the accrual and decay of bone tissue in animal models, effects of nutrition, calcium plus vitamin D supplementation and physical activity on bone health, . . .

He was a good clinician and much beloved by his patients. At Leuven University Hospital he was a spiritual father of the multidisciplinary approach to osteoporosis and organized cross-talk and collaborations between geriatricians, rheumatologists, endocrinologists, physiotherapists, and gynecologists, leading to the implementation of a clinical pathway of high quality.

Steven was one of the first advocates of integrating the domain of fall risk and fall prevention into the management of patients with an elevated absolute fracture risk. In Belgium (Flanders) he was one of Leuven University's representatives in the "Expertise Centrum Valpreventie Vlaanderen".

He was an internationally recognized expert in the field of osteoporosis and metabolic bone disease, and collaborated with many colleagues in countries all over the world. In these friendly relationships, his translational and clinical interests focused on determinants of age-related skeletal fragility and strategies to reduce fracture risk. Specific areas of expertise included musculoskeletal frailty, osteoporosis in old age, and innovative trial design.

Steven served as an advisor on numerous boards and committees. In recent years, he was intimately involved in the design and coordination of a number of international multicenter clinical trials of various pharmacological agents for the promotion of musculoskeletal integrity in patients with osteoporosis.

Steven was an active member of the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), where he was an elected member of the Scientific Committee, conducting multinational research projects and advising IOF on scientific matters and objectives for clinical and basic research. As a brilliant lecturer he served on many IOF courses, e.g. the Advanced Training Course on Osteoporosis and the IOF/ISCD DXA courses.

He was an active and regular contributor to the ASBMR Annual Meeting for many years, participating as an abstract reviewer, session moderator, symposium speaker, and Meet-the-Professor presenter.

Steven was involved in the genesis and development of the European Society for Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis (ESCEO). From the onset, he was one of the most respected and most active members of the Scientific Advisory Board of this organization. He led several ESCEO projects, dealing for example with postmenopausal osteoporosis, secondary osteoporosis or frailty, and sarcopenia. He served as the first or lead author of several ESCEO publications in first-line journals during the past decade. He was instrumental in the development of ESCEO and its partnerships with other supra-national societies, including EUGMS. Steven's scientific expertise and integrity, as well as his outstanding human skills, will be deeply missed by his colleagues at ESCEO.

As a past president of the Belgian Bone Club he contributed to development of the osteoporosis guidelines in Belgium, e.g.

standardization of the DXA-based diagnosis of osteoporosis in men and women, pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic management of postmenopausal and glucocorticoid-induced osteoporosis, and health technology assessment in osteoporosis.

Steven was also a prolific author, having published widely on age-related bone fragility and fracture risk in numerous journals, including *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*, *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Lancet*, *Osteoporosis International* and *New England Journal of Medicine*. Over the years, he was an author on 126 papers published in JBMR. He served on the editorial boards of *Osteoporosis International* and *Calcified Tissue International*.

Above all, Steven Boonen will be remembered as a good friend to many of us. He was interested and could listen attentively to histories. He was sympathetic to one's concerns, and always provided help to improve by his always positive and entertaining attitude.

Steven was a family man. His wife Anne and daughter Annelien were his most beloved persons on earth. In his free time he enjoyed traveling and reading on a variety of topics, reflecting his broad interests, e.g. the history of social development, politics, and finance. Steven was an extremely well organized man, also in many aspects of his daily life. He had a passion for photography and leaves us many beautiful pictures from his too short stay with his family and all of us.

We will miss you, Steven!

His colleagues from the Belgian Bone Club : Serge Rozenberg, ULB; Jean-Yves Reginster, Ulg; Jean-Marc Kaufman, Ug; Jean-Jacques Body, ULB; Jean-Pierre Devogelaer, UCL; Pierre Bergmann, ULB; Olivier Bruyère, Ulg; Stefan Goemaere, Ug