The George Murdoch Prize
ISPO UK Member Society Annual Scientific Meeting
12 October 2018, Southampton.

Introduction by Professor Rajiv Hanspal

This prestigious prize is awarded every two years by ISPO UK MS, in honour of the late Professor George Murdoch, a founding member of ISPO and the society’s 2nd International President. Prof Murdoch, an orthopaedic surgeon in Dundee was a pioneer in amputation rehabilitation and is credited for first introducing Multi-disciplinary approach in Amputee Rehabilitation in UK.

In correspondence at the time of establishing the Prize Lecture, Professor George Murdoch’s wishes were

- that the prestige lecture be in the fields of amputation surgery, prosthetics, orthotics or related rehabilitation and bio-engineering.
- that it be awarded to an individual who demonstrates ‘commitment and real understanding of the patient’s personal problem, assessment, the program of rehabilitation and a measurement of the ultimate outcome’.
- that the applicant shows evidence of commitment to the disabled.
- that the applicant ‘tackled’ the influence of government (in the broadest sense) with respect to attitude, regulations applied and their influence on major events in the patient’s history.

This year’s Murdoch Prize Lecture has been awarded to Prof Dr Jan Geertzen from the University Hospital in Groningen, Netherlands.

I first met Jan in 1998 at the ISPO World Congress in Amsterdam – when he was President of the Dutch ISPO Member society and involved in organising (as the deputy general chairman) a most successful World Congress. He has served in various capacities in ISPO, nationally and internationally and was the International President from 2011 -13 and Chairman of the World Congress in Hyderabad. He is a Rehabilitation Physician, having graduated from Utrecht. Since 1986 as a registrar, and since 1990 he has been a consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at University Medical Centre in Groningen and since 2008 he has been CEO of Centre of Rehabilitation, a department that has 650 employees. It is also a department that is listed as No 2, globally for number of peer reviewed publications. At lunch today, he proudly pointed out that every one of the 5 free papers presented in the morning quoted a study from one of his registrars (trainees). He himself has over 250 publications. He has chaired several working parties for development of standards and guidelines (CRPS and amputation and prosthetics of the lower extremity).

Jan’s own interest in research is mainly focused on CRPS, phantom pain and rehabilitation for limb loss. He is not a stranger at UK meetings and some of you may remember his presentation on Sex in Disability at 9 am on day 1 in our meeting in Sheffield. His own PhD though was on CRPS and if you were to see the topic of Amputation in the Royal College of Physicians Guidelines on CRPS published in July this year, you will note that most of the evidence on amputation in Pain comes from his department in Groningen.

Prognosis following amputation for CRPS has reputedly been very poor and surgeons will not amputate without referring pre-operatively to his team.

To amputate or not to amputate ? – it remains a vexed question and we look forward to hearing what Jan has to say.

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