

Patrick W. Serruys and the roots of PCR

Jean Marco^{1*}, MD; Marc Doncieux²

1. Chairman of PCR, Martres Tolosane, France; 2. CEO, Europa Organisation, Toulouse, France

Jean Marco

The first time I met Patrick Serruys was at a meeting organised by Paul G. Hugenholtz, one of the founders of the ESC and Emeritus Professor of Cardiology at the Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam. I remember some slight divergence of opinion on the treatment of myocardial infarction – specifically on the place of fibrinolysis as compared to PTCA – and I was immediately struck by how Patrick went right to the core of what was essential, arguing that it was important to completely analyse one strategy and finding a consensus on that strategy, rather than having multiple approaches. The next time we came together was in Toulouse at the first meeting on angioplasty and revascularisation in January of 1983. Patrick Serruys was relatively unknown at the time – hard to imagine today – but his visionary lecture on “Computerised quantitative coronary angiography (QCA) applied to PTCA” was so clear and inspiring that several of the participants approached me asking who this brilliant speaker was, saying that they were struck by his “intelligence and brio”.

At the end of these early courses there was a discussion with worldwide experts about the use of guidewires and the place of guidewires in our daily work. John Simpson presented his first experience with the steerable wire technique. The conclusion was that 15%, maybe 20%, of our interventions would use them! Patrick – who always had an encompassing approach, a global vision of the future that guided his thinking – told me that “after 20 years we will probably completely forget all these initial conclusions.”

At the very beginning of PCR history, at the “Complex coronary angioplasty and new techniques in interventional cardiology Course” organised in Toulouse in 1989, Patrick naturally took his place as one of our key, privileged speakers and participants in the course. This is a part he plays so well, and his role has only grown

in importance as the course evolved. When later he created EURO CVS in Rotterdam, his goal was, like ours, to further the essential reflections and practice in our discipline, there was never any competition between our two groups.

From our earliest collaborations Patrick Serruys was involved in the printed material generated by EuroPCR, and was instrumental in the book we published at one of the early courses, a book which in a very real way acted as a scientific anchor to the practical aspects of the course. His engagement in this ongoing reflection on our knowledge and experience and its effective diffusion has always been paramount to him. Concerning EuroIntervention and the various supplements and books that we are working on, his presence has always been actively felt on every level, from the creation of the journal itself to, of course, its content.

What has remained constant for me about Patrick Serruys throughout all these years is the way he brings his unique intelligence to all he touches; always with a sly sense of humour and an enormous scientific and quantitative rigour. Patrick has always maintained a fresh and creative analysis of scientific content, and this – fused with the practical aspects of PCR itself – advances our discipline and defines what we are trying to accomplish in interventional medicine and education.

Today he is, without doubt, one of our most brilliant thinkers, perhaps in the history of European interventional cardiology. As both a scientist and clinician, Patrick Serruys is the clear leader of our generation in the creation and conduct of studies, research and in the reporting of data. And he does this always with a certain grace, never losing the incredible scientific and human dimension of his presence and work.

* Corresponding author: 31, avenue des Pyrénées, 31220 Martres Tolosane, France
E-mail: jmarco@europcr.com

Marc Doncieux

The PCR family was born out of the evolution in knowledge, practice and technique that owes much to the dedication of its founders. Its early roots can be traced to a series of encounters between Jean Marco and Patrick Serruys in the late 70s and early 80s which played a key role in its development. EuroPCR directly – and the entire PCR family indirectly – was born out of, and in a sense came of age, through the evolution in the interaction between Patrick Serruys and Jean Marco. This is an interaction that I have had the honour of witnessing, and in my own way, supporting. The force of Patrick in the history EuroPCR and the PCR family has always been his incredible vision, what he sees, his power of analysis, his ability to bring these ideas and concepts together, his ability to synthesise.

He looks towards the future... and PCR has always benefited from his vision.

From my point-of-view, managing the non-medical aspects of PCR, what struck me was the consistency in which he treated us all, and the interest he took in all the parts of our work, not only the clinical aspects of interventional cardiology, but the transmission of that knowledge through the course and other forms of communications. His constant attention and commitment to such things as the course book that Jean Marco mentioned earlier, formed the initial

nucleus of what would become EuroIntervention and PCR publishing. His attention to detail and love of innovation – when innovation can really work – has led to our current creation of web and electronic based media, as well as the enormous challenges of the upcoming textbook.

Throughout all these years I have been most struck by the strong spirit of collaboration rather than competition that has characterised Patrick Serruys's relationship to us. From the beginning, I remember the mutual respect and admiration that existed between Jean Marco and Patrick, a respect that continues to this day. By 1999, when the two courses joined together, there was a true symbiosis, a quality that has allowed for the progressive development of not only EuroPCR and the entire PCR family, but, more importantly for the lively promulgation of knowledge in the field of interventional cardiology.

Through Patrick, we have been given the chance to have a strong European presence in an international arena, and the Lifetime Achievement award that Patrick Serruys received from the American College of Cardiology is further testimony that the esteem we hold him in here in Toulouse and throughout Europe is clearly echoed by the international community as well.