
Preface

Elie Geisler

Stuart School of Business,
Illinois Institute of Technology,
Chicago, Illinois 60661, USA
E-mail: geisler@stuart.iit.edu

This special issue is in honour of Professor Koos Krabbendam upon his retirement from the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Giuseppe Turchetti and I have assembled for this special issue a set of eight original papers in the management of healthcare technologies. The papers cover a wide range of advanced topics which are relevant to the main theme of the decade-long work that Koos, Giuseppe and I have been building: the hospital of the future.

I first met Koos when he visited Chicago in November 1999, on the eve of our Thanksgiving Holiday. We chatted for a while and discovered that we had much in common in our research and aspirations. Koos returned on Memorial Day, in May of 2000. He joined our family in our traditional US backyard cookout on the grill with hotdogs and hamburgers. Afterwards, we talked about plans for an annual conference on the management of healthcare technologies, joint research projects, and a dedicated peer-reviewed journal. When I suggested that we should have a stirring name for the annual conferences, Koos did not hesitate: "we'll call it the Hospital of the Future" he said matter of fact. And so, we engineered the annual conference, then the *International Journal of Healthcare Technology and Management* (now in its 12th year of publication), and the Healthcare Technology Management Association, with members in over a dozen countries. Since 2000, we have held the conference in the Netherlands, the USA, the UK, Denmark, Austria, and Italy. The authors who contributed to the *IJHTM* in the past decade have come from 21 countries around the globe. This is quite an achievement for an informal discussion which began with a cookout in our backyard in Evanston, Illinois.

Koos was a driving force of all our activities. He never hesitated to fly to any destination and to hold personal contacts with whomever we needed to persuade, cajole, or obtain cooperation in our endeavours. His research on improving efficiency of operations within hospitals has contributed to a project in a large US hospital. This project has led to improvements in some of the operational aspects of moving patients through the emergency department of the hospital.

What began as a professional association had evolved into a friendship. Koos, his lovely wife Pietie and my wife Betsy and I spent wonderful times together in Europe and in the USA. We did not join the Krabbendams in their excursions to climb mountains in Africa and Tibet, but we did explore Athens, Greece.

As Koos retires from his official tasks at the University of Twente, I am certain that he will continue his exploration of managerial topics in healthcare and his travels around the world. After all, there are so many problems yet to be solved in hospitals and so many mountain peaks to conquer...