

Erasmus MC Fires Dr Don Poldermans

Michael O'Riordan | November 21, 2011

(Updated November 23, 2011) November 18, 2011 (Rotterdam, the Netherlands) — Erasmus Medical Center has fired **Dr Don Poldermans**, a well-known researcher in cardiovascular medicine, for violations of academic integrity [1]. In a statement, the hospital said that Poldermans was careless in collecting data for his research and also used fictitious data to prop up his findings.



Dr Don Poldermans

"In one study it was found that he used patient data without written permission and used fictitious data and that two reports were submitted to conferences that included knowingly unreliable data," according to the medical center.

Several days later, on November 23, the **European Society for Cardiology (ESC)** issued a statement saying that Poldermans had resigned from the ESC's Committee for Practice Guidelines [2].

Before his dismissal, which was first reported by the Dutch news agency **NRC** and later by **Retraction Watch** and **Cardiobrief**, Poldermans was best known for his work in using beta blockers in surgery patients and published a paper in 1999 on the use of **bisoprolol** during vascular surgery. He has also published studies on the use of statins in cardiac and vascular surgery. Cardiobrief is reporting that Poldermans's research into the use of perioperative beta blockers has been the "subject of considerable criticism and scrutiny," noting that other researchers have cited his research as an example of the problems of stopping trials early.

In its press statement, Erasmus Medical Center reports that during the inquiry Poldermans said his mistakes were unintentional. The hospital plans to contact the patients involved in Poldermans' research and apologize.

"The study that gave rise to the inquiry committee having to take action was the health of patients who had to undergo surgery," according to the medical center. "The aim of the study was to identify which factors can contribute to being able to better estimate the risks of complications. There were no medical implications for the patients who took part in the studies."

Poldermans is the author or coauthor of more than 500 research papers, and was recently involved in the 2009 ESC guidelines on the management of cardiac risk in noncardiac surgery.

In its statement, the ESC said that the society is reviewing this document "in order to decide if these need to be re-examined in the light of recent events. A new statement will be issued by the ESC once a decision has been reached."

The statement goes on to say, "We are saddened by Professor Poldermans' situation and, although we are confident that our guidelines are supported by reliable data, we are carefully looking into the guidelines for pre-operative cardiac risk assessment."

Poldermans is also lead investigator of the Dutch Echographic Cardiac Risk Evaluation Applying Stress Echo III (DECREASE III), a study on the perioperative use of extended-release **fluvastatin** (Lescol XL, Novartis) in patients undergoing vascular surgery. That study, reported by **heartwire** in 2008, showed that patients treated with fluvastatin who were not already taking a statin had nearly a 50% reduction in myocardial ischemia as well as reductions in cardiovascular death/nonfatal MI.

References

1. Erasmus Medical Center. Erasmus MC dismisses professor [press release]. November 17, 2011. Available [here](#).
2. ESC. Dismissal of Professor Don Poldermans from the Erasmus Medical Center (NL) [press release].

November 23, 2011. Available [here](#).

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