Obituary of Professor Christophe Mariette

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Professor Christophe Mariette.

On Wednesday morning, July 19th 2017, the Claude Huriez University Hospital gradually entered a state of somber astonishment. The news had spread overnight; people already informed arrive at their posts, silent and shocked. The staff of his department was informed by his mentor, Professor Jean Pierre Triboulet; Christophe Mariette suddenly passed away on July 18th at the age of 47.

Professor Mariette was the model of the modern surgeon, researcher, and a worldwide reference on upper gastrointestinal surgery. With brilliant spirit and sharp intelligence, he conceived and carried out several inspiring projects together with fellow surgeons and oncologists. His hard work, scientific rigor, and charismatic personality will stay in memory for all who knew him.

Born on November 16th 1969, Christophe studied medicine at the Necker Faculty of Medicine in Paris from 1987 to 1994 and was then appointed resident at the Lille University Hospital from 1994 to 2001. During his residency, he met Professor Jean-Pierre Triboulet who became his mentor. They developed a close collaboration and built a department dedicated to oncological, and more specifically to esophagogastric surgery. Appointed Senior Resident in 2001, he conducted a PhD thesis dedicated to carcinogenesis of esophageal adenocarcinoma, and obtained his PhD title in 2004. He then became Professor at the University of Lille in 2006 and was appointed Head of the Department of Digestive and Oncological Surgery in 2012 after the retirement of his mentor, Professor Triboulet. In clinical research just as in translational research and in everyday practice, the patient remained at the center of his concerns.

On a regional level, Professor Mariette became the Coordinator of the ‘Integrated Research Center in Oncology: ONCOLille axe 1: resistance to locoregional treatments’, labeled by the French National Cancer Institute (INCa).

On a national level, Professor Mariette’s innate dynamism and enthusiasm was the origin of the creation of the FRENch EsoGastric Tumours (FREGAT) clinical network, promoting research in esogastric cancer in France since 2011. This network, associated with the FREGAT clinicobiological database*, was funded by the French National Cancer Institute (INCa) in 2013 and opened in January 2015. It combines as of today 46 clinical teams from 33 hospitals in France. The FREGAT under his continuous leadership became one of the most successful esophagogastric project groups worldwide and has been internationally admired for its amazing productivity and scientific excellence. Professor Mariette was also a member of the French University National Council (CNU section 52.02) since 2012 and became its Chairman in 2014. Since 2013 he was Chairman of the French Federation of Surgical Research (FRENCH), in charge of the design of surgical national clinical trials and the teaching of clinical research methodology. In addition, Professor Mariette was a Member of the administrative council and Scientific Committee of the French Federation of Digestive Oncology (FFCD—PRODIGE), coordinating several clinical trials, and encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration between surgeons, oncologists, and related specialties.

On an international scale, Professor Mariette was a member of several prestigious scientific societies, including the European Surgical Association (ESA), the European Society for Diseases of the Esophagus (ESDE, executive board member and treasurer since 2013), and the International Society for Diseases of the Esophagus (ISDE). He participated in the Editorial Board of several journals including the Annals of Surgery, Gastric Cancer, European Journal of Surgical Oncology, and Journal of Visceral Surgery. As
a well-known international expert in the field of the medical and surgical treatment in esophageal and gastric cancer, he was regularly invited for conferences and educational courses in France and abroad.

Christophe was a pioneer and a leading person in esophageal surgery. We admire his scientific productivity and how he challenged us to innovate and to think about the optimal treatment for our patients. But beyond that he was a phenomenal surgeon with remarkable technical skills and courage, someone to whom we all looked up and learned from. He inspired us all with his intelligence, ethics, originality, extraordinary scientific skills, and ambition to bring upper gastrointestinal surgery to a higher level.

Our thoughts go to his sister and brother to whom we extend our sincere condolences.

Christophe is now in the sky with the shooting stars. ∗https://www.fregat-database.org/

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