

Zoom On: Elias Brountzos, CIRSE President 2016-2017



Prof. Elias Brountzos, MD

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Professor Elias N. Brountzos took up office as the Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiological Society of Europe (CIRSE) President at the [2015 annual scientific meeting](#) in Lisbon, 26-30 September, when the Society celebrated its 30th anniversary.

What are your key areas of interest and research?

Much of my work has focused on peripheral vascular disease, particularly on cellular mechanisms of restenosis after percutaneous transluminal angioplasty (PTA), stenting in the peripheral arteries, peripheral stents and stent grafts. Another vascular interest of mine is the endovascular treatment of abdominal and thoracic aneurysms. I am also interested in venous disease, particularly transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS), inferior vena cava (IVC) filters and venous insufficiency, and have worked on developing a biosynthetic prosthetic venous valve for venous insufficiency. However, I am also interested in liver tumour treatments such as chemoembolisation and portal vein embolisation for residual liver-volume augmentation prior to hepatectomy.

What are the major challenges in your field?

I have been very lucky to live through the evolution of interventional radiology. Initiating a new treatment modality is always a huge challenge. Clinical colleagues have sometimes been supportive, but the responsibility has ultimately fallen on us. Establishing interventional radiology in hospitals country-wide (or Europe-wide) is truly a huge task.

As a scientific community, we face the challenge of strengthening our status in modern medicine. IR covers a very broad spectrum of diseases, both in elective and emergency settings. Proper training and accreditation are paramount for ensuring patient safety, and to avoid the loss of IR treatments to other clinical specialties. A clear definition and identity of the subspecialty's role within radiology is required to attract young, focused trainees willing to take on clinical responsibilities. The future of interventional radiology should include both outpatient and inpatient clinics with greater patient contact, clinical patient management and follow-up. I believe that adoption of a clinically-based interventional radiology practice model is an inevitable step going forward.

What is your top management tip?

Have a good strategic goal and make sure your partners support it. Effective management is an art, and I do not consider myself to be an artist in this respect. I believe in leading by example. I am a hard worker and expect the same from my team. I let them know that I have high (but not unreasonable) standards, and at all times expect excellence. Competence breeds confidence, and successfully achieving ambitious goals motivates us to try harder. I strongly believe that if your colleagues know you demand excellence from yourself, they're more likely to find it in themselves. Moreover, by publicly recognising their efforts and achievements, you not only build up their confidence, but also encourage future contributions and effort.

What would you single out as a career highlight?

As a practising physician I have had moments of great enthusiasm and huge rewards from treating patients. However, the biggest highlight is being CIRSE's President. I feel a great sense of responsibility stepping into a position that has been served by such important individuals.

If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

I have wanted to become a physician since childhood. I don't know how I came up with this idea. I started my medical career as a surgical resident, but changed to radiology because I realised that most of the diagnosis depends on it, and realised the potential of being a curer, too.

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Fortunately I have not been disappointed. If I had to do something truly different, I would like to work professionally in mountain-climbing areas or pursue other outdoor activities.

What are your personal interests outside of work?

I love to spend time with my family. Otherwise, I also very much enjoy outdoor activities: I love cycling, mountain climbing, skiing, and windsurfing. Spending time in the outdoors fills me with a strong sense of euphoria and well-being.

Your favourite quote?

I don't really use quotes in my daily life, only occasionally. Recently, I have been very frustrated with difficulties that our world has to put up with. I read lots of history and realise that we as humans have not significantly changed our behaviour. I am impressed by a quote used by Sir Ivor Roberts on his retirement as British Ambassador to Italy: "The strong do what they can; the weak suffer what they must". This quote comes from Thucydides' [Melian Dialogue](#) in his History of the Peloponnesian War (416-415 BC), describing the cynical attitude of the emissaries from an attacking Athenian army demanding the surrender of the besieged city of Melos.

Prof. Brountzos obtained his medical degree from the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) in 1982. After working as a clinical doctor in internal medicine and general surgery for one year, he completed his radiology training at Patras University, in western Greece.

Prof. Brountzos worked as a radiologist at the Metaxa Cancer Hospital in Piraeus from 1990 to 1999, then focused on interventional radiology following a visiting research fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital in the United States. Prof. Brountzos became assistant professor of interventional radiology at the Medical School of NKUA in 2000. In 2002, he spent six months at the Dotter Institute of Oregon Health and Sciences University as a visiting research fellow. He became a full professor of interventional radiology in 2009.

Prof. Brountzos has authored 137 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and ten chapters published in international and Greek books. He serves on the editorial board of [Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology \(CVIR\)](#) and Diagnostic Imaging Europe. In addition, he is a reviewer for several journals, including the European Journal of Radiology, Lung, the European Journal of Neurology, Kidney International, the Journal of Postgraduate Medicine, and the Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology.

Prof. Brountzos has been an active member of CIRSE, working for several years on its Standards of Practice Committee and its Scientific Programme Committee, of which he was Deputy Chair from 2008 to 2009, and Chairman from 2010 to 2011. He has been on CIRSE's Executive Committee since 2007 and a member of its Executive Board since 2012.

He also worked for the European Congress of Radiology as Subcommittee Member for Interventional Radiology and Vascular Radiology between 2006 and 2012, and was the Chairman of the Interventional Subcommittee of ECR 2012. Prof. Brountzos is a member of the Executive Committee of the [Hellenic Society of Interventional Radiology and Interventional Neuroradiology](#), and Chairman of the Greek Ministry of Health's committee for the subspecialty of IR.

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