

In Memoriam

Michaela Diamant, 11 April 1962–9 April 2014



Professor Michaela Diamant, MD, PhD, FRCPE, died on 9 April 2014 at the age of only 51 years. Michaela was born and grew up in Prague, Czech Republic. Following her family's move to the Netherlands, she obtained an MD degree in 1987, *summa cum laude*, from Leiden University and earned her PhD in 1991 with a thesis entitled 'Neuropeptides, autonomic stress responses and behavior' (Rudolph Magnus Institute, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands). Following her clinical specialty training in internal medicine, she was also certified in nephrology and endocrinology. In 2000 she joined the Diabetes Center, Department of Endocrinology, at the VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam, headed at the time by Robert J. Heine, whom she succeeded in 2008. In 2009 she became Professor of Diabetology at the VU University in Amsterdam.

Michaela developed a very active and prolific team dedicated primarily to translational research. She championed and contributed greatly to the understanding of diabetic cardiomyopathy [1], cerebral changes in patients with type 1 diabetes [2], clinical use of glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RAs) [3] and glucocorticoid-induced diabetes [4,5]. She collaborated with several national and international researchers on basic science topics that were carefully aligned to her translational research programme, and established deep friendships with numerous colleagues throughout the world [6-8]. We are just a few of the many who were fortunate enough to be touched by her.

Her dedication to research was extensive, with over 300 contributions in the form of original papers and book chapters. Michaela was passionate about her research and also expected the same of her PhD students and collaborators; her publications clearly reflect the patient focus in everything she did. She was a gifted speaker and was invited to talk on her work around the world, typically addressing issues important to both healthcare providers and diabetic individuals.

Michaela was involved in a number of international professional bodies, including being awarded fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh) in 2011, and was an active member of the Dutch Diabetes Research Association, the EASD and the ADA, all of which she supported in various capacities. Particularly noteworthy was her membership of editorial boards, including working as an Associate Editor for *Diabetologia* between 2005 and 2009, and continuing on the Advisory Board from 2010 to 2011. She was also involved in programme and abstract review committees, as well as the organising committee for the EASD meeting in Amsterdam in 2007. She contributed to the most recent EASD/ADA guidelines for the management of hyperglycaemia in type 2 diabetes [9], and to the development and implementation of the Dutch diabetes guidelines. This type of selfless activity was characteristic of Michaela's contribution towards improving the quality of life of individuals with diabetes, as well as their understanding of the disease.

Until the end, she continued to care for her diabetic patients and pursued her research interests at the VU University Medical Center. At the time of her death, Michaela was undertaking studies to better understand the mechanisms and impact of glucocorticoid-induced diabetes [10,11] and to unravel the renal effects of incretin-based therapies [12]. During her final months, she passionately went about ensuring that her PhD students, fellows and research colleagues were well taken care of. In addition to being an excellent mentor from a scientific standpoint, she was also deeply concerned with the well-being of her students in their lives outside the lab.

Diabetes care and research has lost an ardent and visionary leader whose goal in life was to understand the pathophysiology of diabetes and to develop novel therapeutic approaches to combat hyperglycaemia. She achieved this in part through collaborations with equally passionate friends and colleagues both nationally and internationally. She was a great mentor for her young colleagues and a wonderful collaborator and friend to many in Europe and around the world.

We will dearly miss her.

Robert J. Heine, Eli Lilly and Company, Indianapolis, IN, USA

Hannele Yki-Järvinen, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

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