

*Biography of Dr. Henri Lokkerbol**

Henri Lokkerbol, Amsterdam 6 January 1911 – Landgraaf 12 April 2000, was a Dutch physician who specialized in radiotherapy. From 1945 to 1964, he was head of the department of radiotherapy of the Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI). From 1965 to 1977 he was head of the department of radiotherapy in the “De Wever” hospital in Heerlen, province of Limburg, in the south of The Netherlands.

He is the only child of Henri Lambert Lokkerbol, deputy manager at the Twentse Bank, and Maria Cornelia Doornaar. Henri Lokkerbol was married to Gerarda Dirkje van den Bosch and had 4 children.

Henri Lokkerbol graduated at the Barlaeus Gymnasium in Amsterdam and studied medicine at the University of Amsterdam. He gained his medical degree in 1942. Henri Lokkerbol was interested in and knowledgeable on technical matters. During his working life as physician, he developed medical apparatus and architectural facilities such as an image-guided Cobalt treatment unit and a new radiotherapy wing for the NKI on the Sarphatistraat in Amsterdam.

At first Dr. Lokkerbol is employed by the Philips Company as general practitioner. However, he falls ill and is examined by means of X-rays. Lokkerbol becomes interested in the application of X-rays and asks Professor J. van Ebbenhorst Tengbergen to be admitted to the radiology training. Already in 1942, he is appointed assistant in radiology in the teaching hospital of the University of Amsterdam. Training takes 2 years during which he will mainly study diagnostic radiography. An anecdote recalls that Lokkerbol does radiation treatments in the teaching hospital (Wilhelmina Gasthuis) in Amsterdam. The equipment is old and primitive. The high voltage is still connected with open, unprotected cables which run across the ceiling. Radiotherapy had hardly been mentioned in the training and when he asks Professor Tengbergen how a radiation treatment should be done, Van Tengbergen answers “always give just 10 x 200 r (approximately 10 x 2 Gy in modern units), that doesn't help much but you don't run into trouble”.

Dr. Lokkerbol also has a small radiology practice at his home on the J.J. Viottastraat in Amsterdam. After World War II, he does X-ray checks of military personnel to be deployed to the Dutch East Indies. Army platoons were summoned and soldiers lined up in front of his house waiting to be seen.

In 1945, Professor Van Ebbenhorst Tengbergen asks Lokkerbol to take over the radiation treatments in the Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI) during the vacation of Dr. Schoenmaeker. The latter decides for another position and Lokkerbol accepts the offer to become head of the Department of Radiotherapy at the NKI. He stays in this position until 1964 when he is succeeded by professor Klaas Breur.

Lokkerbol has his doubts about the situation which he confronts in the Department of Radiotherapy at the NKI. The standard dosimeter which Daniel den Hoed has designed is available for accurate dosimetry, but the 1 million volt X-ray machine of Philips is one of a kind, cumbersome to operate and inaccurate. The 4 orthovoltage machines for 200 kV X-rays are old and share a single treatment room which was planned as such in 1929. Also the equipment for radium treatment is defective. Dr. Lokkerbol makes a fresh start and begins a staged modernization of the department.

In 1946, the development programme “The Helping Hand” by Professor Ralston Paterson of the Christie Hospital and Holt Radium Institute in Manchester, UK offers Lokkerbol the possibility of attending a refresher course in modern radiotherapy. Over the years up to 1964, Henri Lokkerbol maintains an intensive and friendly contact with Professor Paterson and his staff. In the course of time, many radiologists from the NKI follow training courses in Manchester; the last is Dr. Marion Burgers in 1962. Lokkerbol develops a modernization programme for the department which is based on irradiation techniques which are adopted from the practice in Manchester.

Around 1960, the constitution of the NKI staff changes radically. The older, leading group of pioneers, such as Wassink (surgeon, head of clinic), Korteweg (head of the research laboratory) and Waterman (head of biological research), who worked independently and often alone, are succeeded by physicians and researchers who aim at treatment and research through cooperation in multidisciplinary groups. This is the main reason why, next to Dr. Lokkerbol a second leading radiotherapist was engaged. In 1964, Dr. Klaas Breur is persuaded to leave his post as director of the Rotterdam Radiotherapy Institute. Breur becomes head of the radiotherapy departments in the Wilhelmina Gasthuis and the NKI.

Henri Lokkerbol leaves the NKI in December 1964 for the De Wever hospital in Heerlen, where he develops the radiotherapy department which eventually becomes the Radiotherapeutisch Instituut Limburg (RTIL) (Radiotherapy Institute of Limburg). Some years after his retirement in 1977, this institute was merged with the radiotherapy institute Maastricht, which is integrated in the teaching hospital of the university in the town of Maastricht in the South of The Netherlands. Lokkerbol continues for some years to lead the department of nuclear medicine in Heerlen. On 12 April 2000, Lokkerbol dies at the age of 89.

**for this biography, the following sources were used:*

- Interview by Dr. H.C. Stam for his book “Radiotherapie in Nederland” (Radiotherapy in the Netherlands), 1993. A draft of this was used which was found in Dr. Lokkerbol’s archives.*
- The opening speech of Henri Lokkerbol on the occasion of opening of the new building of the Department of Radiotherapy in the NKI in 1953. This was found in the archives of Dr. Lokkerbol*
- Information from family members of Henri Lokkerbol*