
Zoom On: Petr Widimský, ESC Gold Medal Winner



Prof Petr Widimsky

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When the Gold Medal awards were handed out at this year's European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Congress in Barcelona, one of the three recipients was Professor Petr Widimský. The 2014 ESC Congress marks 15 years since Prof. Widimský's presentation in Barcelona of his PRAGUE 1 study. In the intervening years, additional PRAGUE studies have continued Prof. Widimský's work on primary PCI as the preferred perfusion strategy in angioplasty. Whereas the initial PRAGUE study demonstrated the advantage of PCI over thrombolysis in acute MI, the results of PRAGUE 2 led to the adoption of a primary PCI programme in the Czech Republic, and the subsequent adoption of the first guidelines published by the Czech Society of Cardiology in 2002.

Today, the efficient infrastructure of the PRAGUE programme has been translated into other cardiology investigations. 19 PRAGUE studies have been launched, 12 completed, with two more are in the planning stages. Prof. Widimský is also credited with launching the ESC's 'Stent for Life' initiative with William Wijns in 2008. Following a survey which showed disparity in the use of primary PCI for MI throughout European countries, 'Stent for Life' encouraged equal access to primary PCI by citing guideline implementation barriers and outlining plans for the individual needs of different countries. As a consequence, PCI rates have doubled in six target countries.

Prof. Widimský is the head of the Cardiocenter at University Hospital Kralovske Vinohrady, which he founded, as well as chair of the Cardiology Department at the Third Faculty of Medicine at Charles University and University Hospital in Prague, Czech Republic. He has worked as an interventional cardiologist since 1991, completing more than 5,000 PCI procedures and twice as many coronary angiograms. He has been an expert consultant at the Bulgarian Cardiology Institute, and is an Honorary Member of the Polish Society of Cardiology.

He is currently serving as the president of the Czech Society of Cardiology (2011-2015). In 2011 at the beginning of his presidency, Prof. Widimský was awarded the most prestigious research award in the Czech Republic, "The Czech Heart 2011". The award was presented to him by Czech Prime Minister Petr Necas.

Prof. Widimský earned his PhD with a thesis titled "Echocardiography in coronary artery disease." The next year, he was the winner of the "Young Cardiologists Award" within the East European Countries. He soon became a member of the Scientific Committee of the ESC, grading abstracts for annual congresses. In 1988, he became one of only seven Czech cardiologists to be named "Founding Fellow" of the ESC. In 1995, he was awarded a DrSc degree upon completion of his thesis on "Myocardial function and perfusion in coronary artery disease".

He has published more than 500 manuscripts, including hundreds which have appeared on PubMed and the Web of Science. He is also the author of 20 textbooks or chapters within textbooks for teaching and research. He has served on the editorial boards for the *European Heart Journal* and *Cor et Vasa*, among other journals.

His 2014 ESC Gold Medal award follows a Silver Medal awarded by the ESC to Prof. Widimský in 2008.

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