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Date February 1st, 2023

Re.: Recommendation Letter for Young Investigator Award for outstanding publication

Dear Madam, Sir,

It is with enthusiasm that I recommend Dianne van Dam-Nolen for the Young Investigator Award. She has written and published an important meta-analysis on sex differences in carotid atherosclerosis which is of high value for both researchers and clinicians and which has already gained substantial attention in public and scientific media by both interviews and a distinction as paper of the month by the European Stroke Organisation.

Dianne was the lead author of the publication 'Sex Differences in Carotid Atherosclerosis: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis' which is published November 2022 in *Stroke*. She conceptualized the idea and design of this study herself after she has investigated this topic first within a patient cohort in which she found interesting and considerable differences between men and women with regard to plaque size and composition (published in January 2022, also in *Stroke*). This was the reason to investigate this topic further since there were several articles reporting on these differences, but without overall conclusion, reflection, and future direction yet in literature. She has designed the study, screened and included the articles (> 1,000), has done the analyses, and has written the full publication.

The published meta-analysis of Dianne is of high clinical value for several reasons. First, plaque composition is related to the risk of ischemic stroke (recurrence) and therefore findings that plaque composition differ between men and women are important in the light of stroke risk prediction. Besides this, the results also have implications for the interpretation of carotid atherosclerosis in men and women during stroke workup which yields a different use of additional imaging modalities per sex. Dianne reflects in her article on the current available knowledge and presents a roadmap explaining next steps which are needed to implement this knowledge on sex differences in carotid atherosclerosis in clinical practice. Moreover, she clearly describes which future research is needed and advocates for paying attention to inclusion of adequate sample sizes of both men and women in new clinical trials.

Several public media – such as *Neurology Today* and *NeuroNews* – have interviewed Dianne regarding her meta-analysis. This stresses the relevance of and interest in this topic and article for both clinicians as a broader audience interested in health. Moreover, her paper was chosen as 'Paper of the Month' by the European Stroke Organisation in December 2022 which shows

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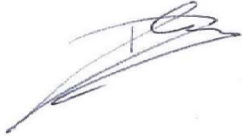
Ms. Trudy Voortman, PhD
Nutrition & Lifestyle Epidemiology

Mr. Frank J. Wolters, MD, PhD
Clinical Epidemiology of Dementia

the large scientific interest in this subject and which underlines the high quality of her publication.

I would really like to recommend Dianne van Dam-Nolen as a candidate for the Young Investigator Award for outstanding publication. She is a young researcher and medical doctor focusing on optimized diagnostics and care for patients with carotid atherosclerosis. In 2022, she has published several important articles of which the above mentioned review and meta-analysis is outstanding.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Bos', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

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