




Editorial

## Memorial for Prof. Dominique Vervoort

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Academic Editor: Haiyang Li

Submitted: 28 April 2026 Revised: 29 April 2026 Published: 26 May 2026

It is with profound sorrow that *The Heart Surgery Forum*, and I, as Editor-in-Chief on behalf of the editorial team, mourn the passing of Dr. Dominique Vervoort, MD, MPH, MBA—Professor at the University of Toronto and the University of Oxford, a cherished member of our Editorial Board, a visionary scholar in global cardiac surgery, and a compassionate advocate for health equity. Although I never had the privilege of knowing him personally, his remarkable career and contributions left a lasting impression, and it was truly an honor to have him serve on our Editorial Board. His untimely departure leaves an irreplaceable void in the communities he served and inspired.

Dominique's academic journey was nothing short of extraordinary. After earning his medical degree at KU Leuven, he went on to train and study across four continents—completing rotations in Germany, the United Kingdom, and Japan; serving as a Paul Farmer Global Surgery Fellow at Harvard Medical School; earning an MPH from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, an MBA from Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, and pursuing a DPhil at the University of Oxford and a PhD at the University of Toronto. This rare confluence of medicine, public health, business, and ethics equipped him with a uniquely holistic lens through which he advanced cardiovascular care.

His scholarly impact was immense. With over 200 peer-reviewed publications, more than 8100 citations, an h-index of 37, and over 650 verified peer reviews, Dominique helped to shape discourse not only in cardiac surgery but in global health policy, health technology assessment, and surgical equity. He founded the Global Cardiac Surgery Initiative, chaired the world's largest global surgery student network (InciSioN), and served on the editorial boards of numerous prestigious journals, including as an Associate Editor for Digital Media at the *Annals of Thoracic Surgery* and Editorial Board Member of the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*. His voice carried weight because it was always anchored in rigorous evidence and unwavering compassion.

For the HSF, Dominique was far more than a name on our masthead. During his tenure, he lent his expertise to the editorial decision-making of many manuscripts, offering meticulous, constructive counsel that upheld our standards and guided authors toward excellence. He fur-

ther enriched our journal by contributing his own scholarly work, and he actively championed HSF's visibility within the global academic community. His engagement was characterized by the same generosity of spirit that defined his entire career—he treated every manuscript not merely as a document to be evaluated, but as an opportunity to nurture the next generation of surgical thinkers.

What distinguished Dominique beyond his remarkable CV was his humanity. A polyglot fluent in ten languages, he embodied the borderless collaboration that modern medicine desperately needs. Whether he was analyzing racial disparities in aortic care, modeling the cost-effectiveness of screening, or advocating for cardiac surgery in low- and middle-income countries, his work was always animated by a simple, powerful conviction: that geographical and economic barriers should never determine a patient's access to life-saving care. The accolades he received—from the CIHR Vanier Scholarship to the World Heart Federation Emerging Leader Award, and his repeated recognition by Forbes 30 Under 30—were testaments to a brilliance that was already reshaping our field.

We did not have the privilege of knowing Dominique in person for long, yet through his written words, his exacting reviews, and his passionate advocacy, we came to know the depth of his character. He was a scholar who refused to remain in the ivory tower, a surgeon who fought for patients he would never meet, and a colleague who lifted those around him.

Dominique Vervoort's light was extinguished far too soon, but the seeds he planted—in journals, in operating rooms, in classrooms, and in health policies across the world—will continue to grow. *The Heart Surgery Forum* pledges to honor his legacy by maintaining the intellectual rigor and global inclusivity he championed.

Our deepest condolences go to his family, his mentors, his colleagues at the University of Toronto and beyond, and to the countless patients and students whose lives he touched.

Rest in peace, dear friend. Your heart may have stopped, but the rhythm of your impact beats on.

By Giuseppe Santarpino

Editor in Chief of The Heart Surgery Forum



### **Author Contributions**

GS contributed to the writing of the obituary and to the editing and revision of the manuscript. The author has read and approved the final version. The author has each made substantial contributions to this work and agree to assume full responsibility for all aspects of the study.

### **Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate**

Not applicable.

### **Acknowledgment**

Not applicable.

### **Funding**

This research received no external funding.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Given Giuseppe Santarpino's role as the Editor in Chief, he had no involvement in the peer review of this article and has no access to information regarding its peer review. Full responsibility for the editorial process for this article was delegated to Haiyang Li. The author declares no conflicts of interest.