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**Title**

Joep MA Lange

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0mg9427v>

**Journal**

Antiviral Therapy, 19(4)

**ISSN**

1359-6535

**Author**

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**Publication Date**

2014-05-01

**DOI**

10.3851/imp2847

Peer reviewed

Joep (Joseph Marie Albert) Lange, 25 September 1954–17 July 2014



Jacqueline van Tongeren, 26 July 1949–17 July 2014



# Remembering Joep MA Lange

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In the days since the horrific downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 and the ruthless management of the crash site, I keep reading and seeing on television descriptions of the major contributions of Joep Lange to HIV research and treatment. However, I have also spent much of these days thinking about Joep as a person with whom I had a very special bond that has now been broken. Joep had a remarkable no-nonsense directness that tolerated no politically-correct mincing of the facts; nevertheless, he spoke with a sense of humour and charm that permitted him to interact effectively with royalty, politicians, bureaucrats, activists, corporate managers and ambitious academicians. One consequence of these characteristics was his truly innovative and insightful approaches to the challenges of HIV treatment and access to health care.

On a personal level these characteristics made time and conversation with Joep a joy. Joep was a polymath. He was probably the most voracious reader I have ever met. There were always multiple books in his travel bags and in his home. He had an extensive recall and enthusiasm for fiction and non-fiction. He read and discussed books about history, biography, health care and economics. He loved to recommend, share and give books. I was always gratified to recommend or find a book for Joep that he had not already devoured. He also had a remarkable enthusiasm for music, both classical and jazz. His extensive and frequent travel provided time to pursue these passions, but he did not just live in his mind. He shared these with anyone who wished to enjoy these with him. He also loved to share his enthusiasm for travel, people, food, wine and art. His partner, Jacqueline van Tongeren, who worked and travelled with him, including his last trip, gradually moved from her role as an HIV research nurse to be the organizer for most of the activities of Joep's programmes. Not only was she a connoisseur of art, but most strikingly, she was a truly lovely and charming person.

But I want to describe Joep's accomplishments, to give you a flavour of the man we have lost. Joep was a pioneer in antiretroviral drug development, in

the design of combination antiviral strategies, and in the implementation of access to antiretroviral treatment for the populations most in need, in low- and middle-income countries. He started his research career in the early days of antiretroviral drug development. With the early descriptions of AZT drug resistance, Joep realized that this would be a major challenge to effective treatment and he sent his student, Charles Boucher, to the Wellcome Foundation in London to learn the assays so that studies could be conducted in Amsterdam on his return. Joep and I were convinced that combination therapy would be needed to prevent treatment failure due to drug resistance and together we began to try to convince colleagues involved in the treatment of HIV. In 1991, Joep and I were invited to participate in the Steering Committee for the Clinical Research & Drug Development Unit of the Global Programme on AIDS of the World Health Organization. I believe that exposure to the work of this committee galvanized Joep's interest in HIV treatment and care in what was then called the 'developing world'. Our mutual involvement in the development of nevirapine and the availability of the results from the ACTG 076 study prompted WHO protocol designs for studies of prevention of transmission of HIV from mother to child in sub-Saharan Africa, and Joep ultimately elected to stay on the programme full time for a period in Geneva. It was not long, however, before Joep found the bureaucracy of the WHO to be more than he could handle, but his commitment to the needs and challenges of treatment of HIV globally was only intensified. In addition to his continuing involvement in HIV treatment strategies in developed nations, Joep embarked on his involvement in low- and middle-income countries. With David Cooper and Praphan Phanuphak, he co-founded and co-directed the HIV Netherlands Australia Thailand Research Collaboration (HIV-NAT). He went on to found numerous clinical, educational and treatment access programmes, which are

described by Peter Reiss and which are a testimony to his energy, innovation and commitment. We worked together with Stephen Cameron to launch the new journal *Antiviral Therapy* with the first issue in January 1996. Seeing his name as co-Editor-in-Chief on

the masthead is deeply saddening, as will seeing his name absent.

Douglas D Richman  
Editor-in-Chief