

Dr. David Kumpe joined University of Colorado Radiology in August 1977, at a time when interventional radiology was just over the horizon. He was the first person in Colorado to devote his career to this new specialty. He had worked for a year at the Universitätsspital in Zürich with Dr. Andreas Grüntzig during the early developmental days of balloon angioplasty, a procedure which was unknown in the U.S at the time. His scientific poster at the 1976 RSNA was the first introduction of balloon angioplasty to the American radiological community. He started and developed body IR at the University of Colorado with the support of surgeons, first in vascular surgery and then with surgeons in many disciplines as they saw the value of the procedures he could perform. He then spearheaded the development of IR in the Rocky mountain region, introducing new procedures on a regular basis, more than 40, at the university and to Colorado. The Kumpe catheter which he finished developing around the time of his arrival at U CO, became the largest selling catheter worldwide – it is the reason domestic and international physicians pronounce ‘Kumpe’ correctly. He was Director of Interventional Radiology from 1978 until 2005.

In 1987-88 he became interested in interventional neuroradiology, after treating two strokes intraarterially - at that time only 4 IA treatments of stroke had been reported from the US. After a sabbatical getting updated on neurointerventional techniques he started the NIR service, and was Director of Interventional Neuroradiology from 1990 until 2017. He set up the IR program for visiting medical students, and the fellowships in IR and NIR; he has trained over 60 fellows in body IR and 14 in NIR.

Because of his involvement in developing procedures he is a sought-out speaker to teach a wide variety of new procedures to IR and NIR physicians at national and international meetings, as well as myriad medical centers in the US and Asia, particularly in China and Korea. He has given over 800 invited presentations on five continents.

His work on dural sinus stent placement in pseudotumor received the Best Original Scientific Poster award at SIR in 2011. He has been listed as a 5280 Top Doc, and in America’s Top Doctors since 2000 and Best Doctors in America since 1996. As a result of his national and international teaching and his contributions he has been awarded both the Gold Medal of the Society of Interventional Radiology and the inaugural International Cooperation Award of the Chinese Society of Interventional Radiology.

During his long career at the University of Colorado he established and developed, at first singlehandedly, the university IR and NIR services - both of which are now indispensable in the functioning of the Anschutz Medical Center. It is seldom that a physician initiates one entirely new vital service during an academic career, and Dr. Kumpe did it twice. He accomplished this by creating a climate of open multidisciplinary cooperation with the referring surgical services. This led to the atmosphere of multidisciplinary cooperation between interventional radiology, interventional neuroradiology, interventional cardiology, vascular surgery, and neurosurgery we enjoy in our institution, which is quite unusual in major medical centers. To honor his career, the radiology department has created the David Kumpe Endowed Chair of Radiology, a \$2M investment.

However, Dr. Kumpe may be most noted among physicians and staff in the Cardiovascular Center for accumulating a remarkable variety of sports-related injuries – pickup basketball, heli-skiing at Blue River, mountain biking on Moab’s Slickrock Trail (9 wks out), in Bear Creek Park (Lakewood CO, 3 day surgical ICU stay), skiing at Copper Mountain, even putting on lead – leading to 11 surgical reconstructions. If he comes into IR on crutches the reaction is usually not ‘OMG, what happened???’ but rather ‘What did you do NOW??’



David A. Kumpe, M.D.

University of Colorado
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