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Summary

# Leaving the playing field

Paul Fockens

Podcast Episode

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**Past UEG president Paul Fox discusses career success in gastroenterology, emphasizing teamwork over individual achievement and advocating for time-limited leadership roles before transitioning to locum work in New Zealand.**

## KEY POINTS

- Fox argues that teamwork is the most important factor for long-term success in medicine, more valuable than h-index or individual brilliance, citing the Dutch pancreatitis working group with 30-40 collaborating authors as an example.
- Success should be measured by publishing in respected journals and earning clinical referrals from colleagues for their own families, not solely by academic metrics.
- Department chairs should step down after 5-10 years to bring fresh leadership and energy, rather than holding positions until retirement age; Fox's institution now accepts this rotation model after initial resistance.
- Fox advises deliberately 'wasting time' by spending 10-15 minutes daily with nurses, lab staff, and colleagues rather than maximizing efficiency, believing these informal interactions generate new ideas and strengthen teams.
- After leading a large endoscopy unit in Amsterdam, Fox now works as a locum gastroenterologist in New Zealand covering sabbaticals until February 2026, with plans uncertain thereafter.

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