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Obituary



On the 20th of June, Professor Albrecht Struppler passed away, aged 90, close to his home at Lake Starenberg near Munich. He was an Honorary Member of the German Society of Clinical Neurophysiology (DGKN) and was its president from 1971 to 1972. For his extraordinary achievements in the field of Clinical Neurophysiology he was awarded the "Hans-Berger-Preis" by the DGKN, its highest award. Internationally, he served the IFCN as chairman of the EMG Committee from 1973 to 1977, and was the convenor of the International EMG Congress of the IFCN held in Munich in 1983. Many of older Clinical Neurophysiologists remember this very successful and exceptional meeting.

Albrecht Struppler was born in Munich in 1919. He was trained in internal medicine and neurology by Gustav von Bergmann and Gustav Bodechtel at the University of Munich and accomplished his academic "Habilitation" in 1954 with a thesis on the pathophysiology of Myasthenia Gravis. He did his early research with Bodechtel at the Friedrich-Baur-Foundation before he was appointed to the Chair of Neurology at the Technical University in Munich in 1968, where he remained as director of the neurological department until his retirement in 1989.

Albrecht was one of the first German Neurologists to visit foreign laboratories after the war. He worked with Yngve Zottermann in

Stockholm and with Fritz Buchthal in Kopenhagen and, consequently, became a pioneer of EMG in Germany. He worked with Stefan Schwab and Raymond Adams and later with Robert Young in Boston on motor control in man which essentially defined his further research activities. There were continuously visiting scientists in his department and he liked to invite them to his elegant villa at Feldafing with its fantastic vista of Lake Starenberg.

Albrecht had a nice personality and was very successful in motivating students and young doctors to go into neurosciences. A large number of gifted and ambitious neurologists worked in his clinic in a productive atmosphere characterized by competition, fairness and friendship. Among these were the later chairholders C.H. Lücking, K.V. Toyka, G. Deuschl, F. Lehman-Horn, W. Oertel and R. Dengler, the author of this contribution.

His research activities focussed on the sensorimotor system, i.e. on diseases with dysfunction of the corticospinal system, the basal ganglia and of pain conduction. He was very interested in the development of technical treatment methods such as functional stereotactic surgery and electrical and magnetic stimulation procedures. He was a pioneer in the cooperation with the engineering departments of the Technical University Munich, and this resulted in well-funded research cooperatives.

Albrecht was also a compassionate physician with much empathy for his patients, who liked him and consulted him over decades. His approach to symptoms and diseases was pragmatic and functional-anatomically oriented and he taught students and coworkers in this art.

Privately he liked the mountains and tried to hike whenever possible. His late family life was full of tragedies. He had to accept the sudden death of his son and then of his two daughters and finally of his wife Elisabeth. He tolerated these painful events stoically and did not allow himself to show much emotion in his typical manner.

We have lost a great man, scientist, teacher and physician after a long and productive life which was yet too short to bring all his plans and ideas to a successful conclusion. Albrecht Struppler taught us "leadership by example" and will remain unforgettable for those who have had the privilege of knowing him.

Reinhard Dengler
 Department of Neurology, Hannover Medical School,
 Carl-Neuberg-Str. 1, 30625 Hannover, Germany
 Tel.: +49 511 532 2391; fax: +49 511 532 3115.
 E-mail address: dengler.reinhard@mh-hannover.de

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