



In Memory of the Late Professor Folke Sjöqvist (1933– 2020)

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It is with great sadness that we have to inform our medical society that Professor Folke Sjöqvist, one of the founding fathers of modern clinical pharmacology as a discipline, passed away on 30 March 2020, aged 86.

Professor Sjöqvist was born on 28 May 1933 in Västervik, Sweden. His alma mater was Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, where he earned his MD and DSc degrees in 1959 and 1962, respectively. After spending several years in the United States, Folke Sjöqvist served from 1964 to 1970 as associate professor in clinical pharmacology at the Karolinska Institute. In 1970, he became the first full professor of clinical pharmacology, not only at Linköping University, but also in the whole of Scandinavia. In 1972, Professor Sjöqvist became the first professor of clinical pharmacology at the newly established Huddinge University Hospital, where he remained chief of the department for 27 years, until his retirement in 1999. Folke Sjöqvist's main scientific interest was in pharmacogenetics, where he established a world-known research team and school. He spent many years as a leader and source of inspiration within the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR). The list of scientific publication is very impressive; he published more than 300 peer-reviewed publications that have been, until now, cited more than 16,000 times, giving him the h-index of 69.

Folke Sjöqvist is survived by his wife Margareta, four children and twelve grandchildren.¹

His numerous publications, countless awards² and utmost respect that he had been receiving from his colleagues over the past five decades still cannot describe the magnitude of the void created by his death. The reason for this is his unique approach to medicine, clinical pharmacology, science and teaching in general.³ Simply, Folke, as we used to call him, lived for clinical pharmacology – for him, it was never just a job, but a true calling. He was emanating his contagious positive energy, accepting everything and even the problems with an optimism and smile. This is why he was not only respected, but liked and loved by his peers, younger colleagues and students.

Although being almost thirty years his juniors and knowing him only from congresses, symposia and the European Association of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (EACPT) meetings, we were also exposed to his positive energy and relentless fight for the advancement of clinical pharmacology. By doing so, Folke and his Scandinavian colleagues helped our predecessors and us to establish this discipline in former Yugoslavia and the countries that emerged from it in the 1990s and this is something that we will never forget, as well as his hospitality and generosity. It was him who established the so-called Scandinavian model of clinical pharmacology that became widely accepted in the South-East Europe.

The pharmacogenetic laboratory which has been recently developed within the Centre for Biomedical Research at the Banja Luka University Faculty of Medicine is based on principles and structure developed by Professor Sjöqvist at Huddinge University Hospital. We can still remember Folke's radiant lecture and participation at the Fourth European School of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics that we organised in Vršac, Serbia, in September 2006. We were truly honoured to be in a position to host him then.

Professor Sjöqvist's passing marks an end to an era, but his spirit will remain living among us throughout the world as a beacon obliging us to carry on the torch of clinical pharmacology.

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