



Founder of EJNM passed away

Wolfram H. Knapp¹

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On October 30, Professor Dr. Dr. h. c. Heinz Hundeshagen closed his eyes forever, four months before his 90th birthday. This was preceded by months of serious illness. Yet the notice of his death has hurt the community of nuclear medicine, not only in Germany. His work has left traces in the memory of generations of those who are involved in our medical specialty throughout Europe.

Heinz Hundeshagen was born in 1928 in a small town in Thuringia, in the former “German Democratic Republic”. The

political circumstances did not allow him to begin university study. So, he had to escape to the German Federal Republic to take up his studies in theology, physics, and medicine in Marburg. In 1959, he graduated in medicine and in 1961, he obtained his “*venia legendi*” after having developed storage of scintigraphic events on magnetic tape and early radiocardiography. As assistant medical director (“*Oberarzt*”) of the department for radiation medicine, he further established radioisotope technology and methods.

From 1965 on, Heinz Hundeshagen built up an exemplary department of nuclear medicine when the “*Medizinische Hochschule Hannover*” was founded. He eventually developed the department into the most advanced and largest clinical nuclear medicine department in Europe, equipped with a nuclear research reactor, a 35-MeV cyclotron, a PET center including radiochemistry/pharmacy, etc., as early as in the eighties of the last century. In two wards with 24 beds, thousands of patients were treated with radionuclides.

From a European perspective, one of the most pioneering activities of Heinz Hundeshagen was the organisation of the field of nuclear medicine as an independent medical specialty, acknowledged in Germany in 1977. It was preceded by the foundation of the German Academy for Nuclear Medicine in 1968, followed by the foundation of the German Society of Nuclear Medicine in 1978, over both of which he presided. The new society attracted colleagues from many other European countries not disposing at comparable platforms for professional and scientific exchange. Thus, Heinz Hundeshagen was motivated to found the European Journal of Nuclear Medicine, the predecessor of EJNMMI. The first issue under his editorship was published in March 1976.

The scientific and clinical outreach of his activities in Europe was the motivation for Heinz Hundeshagen to expand the former German Society of Nuclear Medicine to the Society of Nuclear Medicine - Europe, based on personal membership in contrast to the nation-based structure of the European Society of Nuclear Medicine having existed in parallel. Since both European societies eventually fused to become EANM in

✉ Wolfram H. Knapp
knapp.wolfram@gmail.com

¹ Medizinische Hochschule Hannover, Hannover, Germany

1986, Heinz Hundeshagen also laid a foundation stone of today's constitution and strength of nuclear medicine in Europe.

Beyond the organisational achievements in the past, Heinz Hundeshagen leaves a legacy still perceived as a prerequisite for success in and of our field. Some personal recollections may illustrate this.

- At a time when PET was regarded as no more than an interesting research tool, Heinz Hundeshagen already advocated its distribution and clinical use in every hospital of excellence. He had the capacity to anticipate future developments and was convinced that trials and demonstration of clinical utility were essential to further promote research with advanced technology.
- He was also convinced that the independency of nuclear medicine as a clinical specialty was a prerequisite for its academic and financial standing as well as for the acquisition of young professionals. Notwithstanding, interdisciplinarity in training of nuclear medicine specialists was regarded to be essential.
- Interaction of two levels of nuclear medicine institutions, large (university) hospital departments and set-ups of phy-

sicians in practices, was an important matter he pursued. Without the possibility to practise nuclear medicine in one's own set-up, no sustainable formation of staff in university or other large hospital departments could ensue; this was his credo.

- Heinz Hundeshagen revealed an internistic view when practising nuclear medicine. He not only focused his attention on a specific disease, but always had the whole patient in mind. Despite his affinity for high-end technology and sophisticated methods, his priority was to lend a feeling of security, confidence, and hope to the patient.

During his emeritus status, Heinz Hundeshagen remained friend and advisor, always welcomed by his successors and former trainees. He lived together with his wife Edith for more than 65 years. Despite his eminent professional commitment and activities, family life, eventually with two daughters, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren, always played an important role in his life. Those who knew Heinz Hundeshagen will commiserate with his wife and his family, and will honour his memory.

Wolfram H. Knapp, Hannover.