

EDITORIAL

A sad message

We are sorry to announce that our esteemed colleague Professor Axel R. Fugl-Meyer passed away in Uppsala on 17 July 2012 at 77 years of age. He was well-known internationally for his contributions to the conceptual aspects of rehabilitation and for his emphasis on the deeper aims of rehabilitation, of both improving function and optimizing the social well-being of individuals, such that vital goals in family life, professional work and leisure-time can be achieved, as well as for creating several assessment instruments for use in rehabilitation medicine. His system for the assessment of patients after stroke (first published in *Scand J Rehabil Med* 1975; 7: 13–31) became the gold standard for assessment of motor function in patients after stroke and has been cited more than 1,700 times, being outstanding among citation rates for our journal. Together with his wife Kerstin, PhD, he developed an instrument for self-assessment of different aspects of life satisfaction, which was used in several doctoral theses and modified further, some studies of its use being published in (*Scand J Rehabil Med* (1988; 20: 17–24; 1991; 23: 83–87; 2002; 34: 239–246; 2003; 35: 84–90), and a publication in *Clinical Rehabilitation* (1991; 5: 25–33) being cited 217 times. It is currently a widely known instrument in rehabilitation research.

Axel R. Fugl-Meyer was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, and gained his medical degree at the University of Copenhagen. He then moved to Sweden and began work at the new Department of Medical Rehabilitation in Göteborg, where he wrote his thesis, entitled "On the ventilatory function in spinal cord transection", a study of lung volumes including flow-volume curves at different levels of injury (*Scand J Rehabil Med* 1971; 3: 141–150 and 151–160), rib-cage and abdominal

volume ventilation partitioning (*Scand J Rehabil Med* 1971; 3: 161–167) and, most importantly, a new method for considerably increasing the movement of the rib cage, and hence vital capacity (*Scand J Rehabil Med* 1971; 3: 168–177). This treatment effect was subsequently demonstrated to be partly sustained over time (*Eur J Respir Dis* 1980; 61: 347–356).

In 1975, Axel R. Fugl-Meyer was appointed Clinical Director of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Norrland University Hospital in Umeå, and subsequently Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Umeå University. He developed the department and collaborated in research activities with colleagues from other disciplines, such as anatomy, sports medicine, surgery and orthopaedics, and with representatives from other professions within the rehabilitation team. He published a large number of studies on muscle function, rehabilitation aspects of brain injuries, and sexual problems in different clinical conditions. In 1995 he left Umeå to become Professor in Uppsala, where he continued his interest in clinical work and research in patients with brain injury. He developed clinical activity in sexological work and research, and this remained his main research interest after retiring from his chair.

We will remember Axel R. Fugl-Meyer for his devoted interest in both theoretical and practical clinical aspects of rehabilitation. He was in many senses ahead of his time in his thinking and often expressed his views strongly on these matters. Many will also remember him for his humour and his friendship. No doubt he made important contributions to the international development of rehabilitation medicine, not least through his publications in this journal.

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Gunnar Grimby
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