

O B I T U A R Y

Sven P.M. Forssman
(1911–1990)

Professor Sven Forssman passed away on May 28. With his death, the whole profession of occupational health lost one of its men of world-wide reputation. He was an outstanding scientist and a warm-hearted man devoted to his profession and people.

He studied and did research in Sweden and Germany. He successfully defended his doctor's dissertation in Lund. His scientific talents were remarkable and already in 1943 he was appointed Professor of Occupational Medicine at the Swedish National Institute of Public Health.

He was a pioneer of modern approach to occupational health expanding diagnosis and treatment of occupational diseases to preventive medicine. His progress in this area became internationally known.

He was a Ramazzini follower in the sense that he considered occupation related illness as a manifestation of many influences; cultural, social, economical as well as environmental. A main strive was to educate the worker to be responsible for his own health at work and to adjust work and work environment to the limits and capacities of the human body, particularly important in the higher age groups. Professor Forssman took an early interest in new health problems created by rapid industrialization in developing countries.

His career could be generally divided into three periods: academic research, industrial applications and creation as well as organization of occupational health institutes, training centres and information resources.

Due to his growing international reputation the WHO and ILO invited him as a consultant and leader in occupational health missions of many kinds. He was assigned to many countries in Europe, Africa, India and South America as a WHO adviser.

During the years 1973–1977 Professor Forssman was assigned to Poland as a Technical Adviser for UNDP/WHO Project on toxicity of new chemical substances and technologies introduced to the industry, implemented by the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Lodz and supervised by the Polish Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

The accomplishment of the Project's goals facilitated the extension and modernisation of the Institute, developed research in the field of toxicology, provided means for postgraduate education to improve qualifications of the personnel and opened sources of international information.

Due to Professor Forssman's professional experience and personal involvement he contributed immensely to the success of the Project, very highly appraised by the World Health Organisation, the UN Development Programme and other bodies involved.

For all his contributions to the successful implementation of the UNDP/WHO Project in Poland, Professor Forssman was awarded the Gold Cross of Merits.

Professor Forssman was a great personality talented in many ways, a diplomat and creator of friendly human relations, very much experienced in international contacts and cooperation. He won hearts of all those who met him personally. He will be truly missed by his many friends and colleagues.

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