Editorial Comment

Symposium: Tscherne Festschrift: Editorial Comment

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Unlike the typical collection of papers generally arranged around a topic, this symposium is arranged around a man. In 1970, Professor Harald Tscherne became the director of the newly created trauma department at the Hannover Medical School [1]. At that time, few considered trauma a specialty, and the management of injured patients was often relegated to junior staff at inconvenient hours. Pre-hospital care systems were rudimentary at best, and few in medicine were thinking about injury prevention. Prof. Tscherne was quickly recognized as a leading thinker in the young and developing field. The Classic article for this issue [2], first published in 1971, presents concepts so familiar to us now as to seem like medical school text. Yet, they were unique at the time, and brought together basic science and clinical experience to establish the principles of modern trauma care. Through the course of his career, Prof. Tscherne made scholarly contributions across the

spectrum of trauma from prevention to rehabilitation. Without question, his most important and lasting contributions have been as a leader and an educator. As such, every article in this collection is authored by a surgeon who spent some period of his or her training in Hannover during the Tscherne years.

To visit Hannover Medical School during the Tscherne years was first to be inspired by its efficiency, but ultimately one came away impressed by the culture of innovation and scientific rigor. There are few major trauma centers in Europe and North America that do not begin their day with the Hannover tradition of morning report. Each morning, Prof. Tscherne reviewed the previous day's activity, with each class of trainees arranged from senior to junior behind the chief. Visitors, of which there were always many, were seated likewise with their colleagues—attending in the front and visitors in the back. Given this first impression of military precision and discipline, it was natural to expect the chief to be close-minded and dogmatic, but this was not the case. He expected his trainees to become innovators in their own right and encouraged them to travel for training and to return to Hannover to become leaders in their focused field. Visitors were welcomed not just as students, but as potential sources of education and information. Prof. Tscherne was committed to developing the best and the brightest leaders and recognized the importance of ideas and approaches not necessarily his own. Many of his “students” now serve in leadership positions around the world (Fig. 1).

This issue is a testament to the effectiveness of his leadership and the breadth of his influence. Ostensibly, the subject is trauma, but the papers in this issue cover the full spectrum of trauma—management of pediatric femur fractures to the basic science of ACL reconstruction. Several papers address techniques and results of fracture

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Fig. 1 Mark S. Vrahas MD is shown.

Fig. 2 Hans-Christoph Pape MD is shown.

fixation. However, Prof. Tscherne advocated understanding trauma as a disease from injury to recovery and other papers in this issue reflect that influence. Sturm, Pape (Fig. 2), and Dienstknecht [5] provide an overarching view in a paper examining the political, economic, and medical factors underlying trauma systems in Germany and North America. Dienstknecht et al. [1] examine potential factors for predicting complications with extremity trauma surgery. Kleber et al. [3] and Pfeifer et al. [4], explore the role of inflammatory mediators in response to trauma. Three

papers address topics relevant to the increasingly important topic of fractures in the elderly, and Holstein et al. [2] examines factors that predict the quality of life after a pelvic fracture. The content represents original data, most of which was generated between 2011 and 2012.

This issue provides only a small sample of individuals and ideas that were affected directly by Professor Tscherne. Many leaders in the field passed through the doors of the Hannover Medical School and benefited from Prof. Tscherne's wisdom, which they subsequently passed on to their trainees. Countless others benefited from his articles, lectures, and general influence on the management of trauma to the ultimate benefit of many thousand patients. In addition, he has been a mentor and a friend to all the contributing authors and surgeons around the world. It is our humble honor to have organized this fitting tribute.

Acknowledgments This edition is dedicated to Harald Tscherne MD, a world leader in orthopaedic traumatology. We would like to tribute this symposium to Prof. Tscherne on the occasion of his 80th birthday. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as coeditors for this special issue. Our special thanks go to all the authors, coauthors, and friends of Prof. Tscherne.

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