REVIEW

The Most Influential Scientists in the Development of Medical Informatics (1): Francois Gremy

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FRANCOIS GREMY (1929 - 2014)

Francois Gremy (1929 - 2014) has a Master's in Physical Sciences, a Master's in Mathematics (1, 2). He was interned in Paris Hospitals as a Doctor of Medicine, and later he became University Professor at several universities in France. Diploma of Higher Education in Theory of Probabilities he received from the Statistical Institute of Paris (1, 2).

Early in his career he worked at the Faculty of Medicine of Tours. This experience led him to the Faculty of Medicine, Pitié-Salpêtrière, where for 23 years, he was professor of Biophysiques, Biostatistics and Medical Informatics, a hospital biologist and Department Head of Medical Informatics in Paris Hospitals, as well as Director of the U-88's Research Unit: 'Public Health and Economical and Social Epidemiology' at INSERM.

In the Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier-Nîmes, Professor Grémy was Professor of Biostatistics and Medical Informatics, and Department Head of Bioinformatics at the Regional University Hospital Center, Montpellier.

Between 1990 and 1996, in the same center, Professor Grémy was Professor of Public Health and Department Head of Medico-Hospital Economy and Preventive Actions. He was President of the Board of Directors of the National School of Public Health of Rennes, member of the National Universities' Council of the High Committee of Public Health, and of the Scientific Council of P.M.S.-I.

He founded in 1967 the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA). He is also the co-founder of the European Federation for Medical Informatics, and served as a member in the European Commissions' activities evaluating informatics technologies in medicine.

His scientific career, is distinguished because of his significant contribution as a researcher and as a forerunner in the field. His influence has ranged from hard sciences to clinical medicine, and he is recognized as a philosopher among medical informaticians. He acquired specific competence in Cardiology and Neurology, especially in neurophysiology. But he also got degrees in mathematics, biophysics, and more recently philosophy. He created the first laboratory for Medical informatics in the mid-60s at the Pitié-Salpêtrière School of Medicine in Paris. As founder of IFIP TC4 that gave rise to IMIA he is considered to be the IMIA father and a key European figure in the field.

During MEDINFO 2004 Conference in San Francisco Francois Gremy received the first IMIA Award of Excellence for his outstanding contributions to IMIA and to health informatics. François was one of the founders of IMIA and his extensive research especially during his time at the University of Montpellier had left a lasting impression on his colleagues, students and friends in Europe and

many other parts of the world.

Francis Gremy was not only a pioneer in the Medical/Health informatics as new field, he had a holistic view on the large variety of medical informatics applications, with humanistic values to be respected and ethical guidelines to propose to follow. His ability to clarify complex matters and his sense of humor were part of his great

teacher talents, associated to his very open mind to perform research in a multidisciplinary approach. His social engagement was also exceptional. He was an emblematic figure who opened new roads leading to patient centered Medical informatics, one of the best examples of the French culture, a Master and a friend (2)."

As the first President of IMIA and for his collaboration when he was President of the School of Public Health of Rennes, Université Catholique de Louvain, acknowledged his key-role in the development of Medical informatics by nominating him "Doctor Honoris Causa" (2).

François Grémy deals with evaluation of health information systems, where he was involved and describes the evolution of his personal ideas. He proposes the main distinction between systems where the user(s) remain(s) external from the running program, from the ones where the user(s) interacting with the program become(s) the main component of the system (1).

Francois Gremy "addresses conventional methods of evaluation used in Medical Technology Assessment, how the whole knowledge in anthropology may contribute strongly to evaluation, and how the subjectivity of the user(s), how he (or they) react(s) with the computing machinery, is a main key to the success or failure of the whole system. He asserts that the temptation of the eradication of subjectivity as a condition for progress is deleterious for our civilization threatened by a comeback of barbarity, and is scientifically wrong (1)."

His honors include the Janssen Prize from the Academy of Medicine; Silver Core International Federation for Information Processing; Chevalier Legion of Honor; Prize in Medicine and Public Health from the Institute of Health Sciences; and an Honorary Doctorate from Catholic University in Louvain, Belgium (2).

REFERENCES

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2. Degoulet P, Haux R, Kulikowski CA, Lun KC. Francois Gremy and Birth of IMIA. *Methods of Inform Med.* 2005; 44: 349-351.