FROM THE HISTORY OF MEDICAL INFORMATICS

The Most Influential Scientists in the Development of Medical Informatics (30): Hans Peterson (1928-2021)

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Hans Peterson, MD, PhD, FEFMI, FACMI, FIMIA, FIAHSI (1928-2021), became a certified physician in Sweden in 1958 and was awarded a doctorate in Medicine in 1967 (1-4). He was an ophthalmology fellow at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm University, and was appointed to faculty positions in Ophthalmology and Medical Informatics at the Karolinska in the late 1970's.

At the time of his election to the College Dr. Peterson was an internationally prominent and prolific author, with more than 100 published papers. He served as editor for textbooks on Communication Networks in Health Care and Human-Computer Communications in Health Care. He has served on the editorial boards of a number of journals, including Methods in Information in Medicine, Medical Informatics, Lecture notes in Medical Informatics, and the Journal of Clinical Computing. He has served on numerous government committees in Sweden, helping to create legislation for patient records and the creation of national information structures for health care (2). Dr. Peterson was named an Honorary Fellow of the European Federation for Medical Informatics and a Honorary Fellow of the International Medical Informatics Association. He also served as President of IMIA from 1983 through 1986. His election as an International Associate of the College recognizes these sustained achievements.

Hans Peterson has been one of the ten representatives of national Medical informatics societies from European countries who with (Barry Barber

(UK), Antonio Perens de Talens (Italy), Francois Grémy (France), Rolf Hansen (Norway), Mogens Jorgensen (Denmark), Hans Peterson (Sweden), Peter Leo Reichertz (Germany), Jan Roukens (Holland), Jan van Egmond (Belgium) and Ilkka Vaananen (Finland) in Copenhagen on September 11th 1976 by their signatures adopted the Statute of the European Federation for Medical Informatics and founded the EFMI.

But, before establishing of EFMI in 1976 Hans Peterson organized the first World Congress of Medical Informatics - MEDINFO (in parallel with the IFIP Congress) in Stockholm, Sweden in 1974 (the Second MEDINFO congress was organized in Toronto, Canada in 1977).

In 1980 IMIA became independent Medical informatics association from IFIP. The inaugurate meeting took place on May 11, 1979 in Salle Capitulaire, Paris with speeches of Professor Bailey (WHO representative), Professor Bobillier, President of IFIP, Professor Francois Gremy (Paris) and Dr. Jan Roukens

(Holland) as Chair of TC4. At the General assembly meeting the following new board was elected: Dr. David Shires (USA) as President, Dr. Hans Peterson (Sweden) as Vice-president and Chair By-Laws Committee, William Abbott, (U.K) was Secretary, Dr. Shigekoto Kaihara (Japan) was Chair Newsletter Committee and Professor Peter Reichertz (Federal Republic Germany) was Chair of Publication Committee. One year after the MEDINFO Congress in Stockholm (1974) (Chair of SPC was Professor John Anderson, UK) (1, 6).

In 1983, after three years as President Elect, Hans Peterson became President of IMIA (1986-1989). "What I remember best", he says, "is that there was no money." MEDINFO '83 had diminished already limited funds, and money was simply not available for what was needed for MEDINFO '86 and subsequent activities. IMIA's officers ended up providing IMIA with free services, from printing and stationery to mailing and telephones. Grants to working conferences were impossible, and IMIA's officers had to spend almost all their time on finances. The final blow came when IMIA closed its permanent secretariat in Amsterdam and its small remaining treasury vanished. The bottom line was "very little time for accomplishments and achievements. The goal was to survive." Now, after completing his 18th year as national representative for Sweden in 1993, Peterson continues to work for the recognition and acceptance of Medical Informatics. In his view, growing decentralization makes standardization critical.

For Peterson, "an international body free from political and governmental influence is absolutely necessary. In this body we have to cooperate also with the industry and get a mutual understanding that cooperation is the only way out."

For his great contribution to development of Medical informatics, recognized internationally, Hans Peterson has been elected as Founding member of International Academy of Health Sciences Informatics (IAHSI) in 2017.

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