Obituary

British Heart Journal, 1975, 37, 331.

Cornelio Papp 1903–1974

Dr. Cornelio Papp died on 8 November just ten days after his wife's sudden death.

Dr. Papp was born in Hungary on 18 September 1903, and from his early years was interested in medicine. He became a student at the University of Giessen, and later went to Milan where he graduated M.D. in 1927. He soon found himself attracted to cardiology and came under the direction and teaching of Professor Pezzi, a leading research worker in heart disease, particularly the development of radiology.

In 1938, with the storm clouds gathering over Europe, Papp decided to emigrate to the U.K. He arrived in September 1938 and settled in London where he pursued his earlier studies in cardiology. It was in these early years in this country that Sir John Parkinson recognized his keen analytical mind and outstanding gifts. Papp attended the clinics at the National Heart Hospital where he found a special stimulus in the decisive personality of Parkinson. At these sessions there were frequent discussions and appraisal of history taking. In recent memories of those days, recorded by Papp, he said that, 'history taking remains today one of the strengths of British clinical teaching; coronary heart disease is diagnosed before electrocardiographic confirmation'.

Fairly early on in his career Papp recognized that congenital heart disease was a neglected chapter in British cardiology. Laubry and Pezzi in 1921 had published a pioneer work, but as late as 1938 it was hardly recognized in this country. After Papp had demonstrated a case of atrial septal defect which had presented with a large pulmonary artery and pulsating branches – the hilar dance of Pezzi – he collected together all the cases of atrial septal defect from three London hospitals and published with Parkinson and Bedford the first comprehensive paper on this topic in England.

Papp recalled that to write a paper with Parkinson was an unforgettable experience – discussion went on for hours about the exact significance of any given sign and every word had to express exactly the meaning attached to it.

I was particularly fortunate in having him with me in the Cardiac Department at the Charing Cross Hospital from 1948–1954. Throughout that time he hardly ever missed a session and collaborated with me and studied many patients in the wards. When the cardiac laboratory findings did not match clinical judgment, we followed clinical instinct and were mostly right. Instinct and experience tend to be undervalued in modern cardiology for they are not parameters which can be fed into a computer.

In the British Cardiac Society, Papp's special interest in the arrhythmias was widely recognized. During my editorship of the *British Heart Journal* his help with papers on this subject was invaluable, and he assiduously dealt with the numerous manuscripts sent to him as a referee. As far as his own work was concerned I particularly remember 'Status Anginosus' in 1960, and 'Episodic, postural and linked angina' in 1962, on both of which we worked together. I also persuaded Papp to write an Editorial on 'A new look at arrhythmias' which appeared in 1969.

He will be sadly missed by his many colleagues and friends. His hospitality and that of his charming wife, his warmth, and his deep and abiding love of music are things that I recall with particular pleasure.

K. Shirley Smith