



IN MEMORIAM

Chris T. Bolliger: keep him in your mind

Felix J.F. Herth

The community of respiratory medicine is shocked and saddened by the unexpected and untimely death of Chris Bolliger who died on November 2, 2012, in Cape Town, South Africa. Up until his death he was the Director and Head of the Respiratory Research Unit and Co-head of the Division of Pulmonology of the Department of Medicine at the University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa.

We have lost a good friend, an experienced researcher, a caring doctor, an excellent teacher and the most wonderful mentor that you could ask for. A complete representation of the life and achievements of Chris Bolliger is not possible. I have highlighted a couple of benchmarks as a reminder.

Chris was born and grew up in Switzerland and attended school in Basel. After graduating from high school he went to medical schools in Basel and Lausanne. In 1976 he completed medical school and began his training in internal and pulmonary medicine in Switzerland. In the early 1980s he moved to South Africa and in 1989 became an Honoured Baccalaureus in Epidemiology at the University of Stellenbosch. In the same year he moved back to Switzerland and took over a consultant position in the Division of pulmonology at the University Hospital of Basel. In the following years he established the interventional pulmonology service in Basel and started his globally recognised research activities in that field [1]. During this time he finished his PhD and was appointed Associate Professor at the University of Basel.

In 1999 he was asked to become Co-chair of the Pulmonology Division and Director of the Respiratory Research Unit at the Faculty of Health Sciences in Cape Town and returned there.

In his career he introduced several techniques in the armamentarium of our interventional options, but he was also active in most areas in pulmonary medicine.

He continued to expand his activities in all the different areas of pulmonary medicine yet remained very active in his initial field of interventional pulmonology. Until his sad death he participated in the development of the new and upcoming technologies and was the key driver of many of these. For example, at the last annual congress of the European Respiratory Society in Vienna in 2012 he presented the first international clinical study evaluating the use of real-time technology for tracking lung tumours during radiation delivery. This pioneering work culminated in a “first-in-man” publication [2].

Thoraxklinik, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany.

CORRESPONDENCE: F.J.F. Herth: Thoraxklinik, University of Heidelberg, Amalienstr. 5, Heidelberg, 69126, Germany. E-mail: felix.herth@thoraxklinik-heidelberg.de

For his unique work in the field of pulmonology he received constant international recognition. In 2010 he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Certificate of the World Association of Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology during their World Congress in Budapest, Hungary.

Chris also played an active role in research aimed at smoking control and cessation. In 2012 he co-authored guidelines on smoking cessation in Africa and the Middle East for healthcare providers, focusing on smoking prevention, cessation and the effects of smoking on the health of populations. He also worked as a board member of the Global Healthcare Alliance for Treatment of Tobacco Dependence (GHATTD).

Beside the already mentioned emphasis on interventional bronchoscopy and thoracoscopy, one of his interests was cardiopulmonary exercise testing. One of his initial publications is still current and represents an important algorithm [3]. Over the years he has published more than 250 peer-reviewed articles, 14 books and various book chapters.

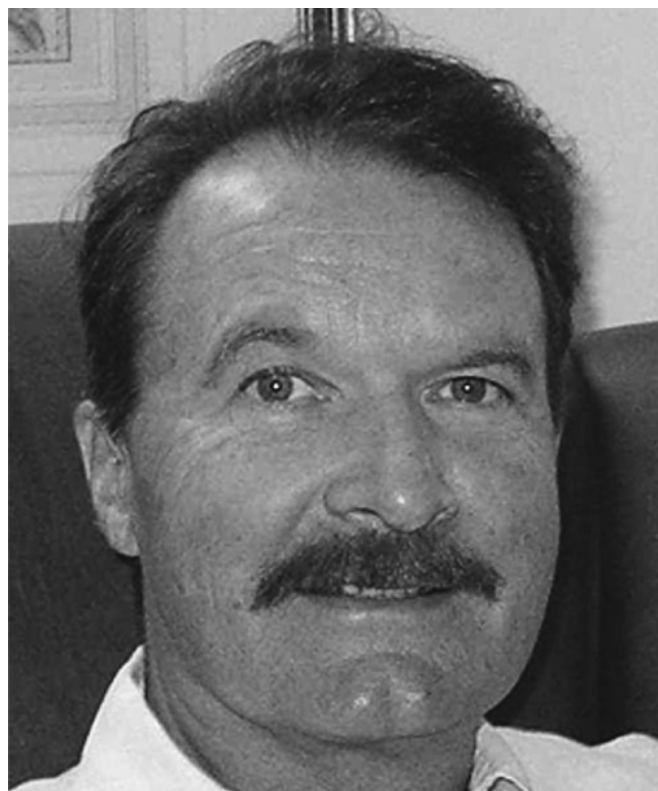


FIGURE 1. Chris T. Bolliger.

In 1998, he succeeded Professor Herzog as the Editor in Chief of *Respiration* [4]. In the following years he developed the journal into one of the leading pulmonary medicine journals. The impact factor increased to 2.4 in 2010 and the numbers of issues grew from six to 12 per year. He introduced the thematic review series, as well as the interventional pulmonology section. In 2002, he formed the successful partnership between *Respiration* and the European Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology.

In addition to his clinical and research activities he was active politically and helped to form the image of modern pulmonology. He was an active officer of the European Respiratory Society and became the Head of the Clinical Assembly in 2005. In this position he developed and strengthened the Assembly and succeeded in uniting the diverse interests within it.

In 2002, he co-founded the European Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology. From 2006 to 2012 he was President of the Society and, during this time, he worked hard to develop the Society.

With Chris T. Bolliger we all lose a good friend, a caring doctor and an excellent researcher. Personally he helped me in my career as a friend and mentor, selflessly and unrequited.

Beside all these activities, family was always important to Chris and he leaves behind a wife and three daughters.

And now? We have to remember him by continuing his ideas, activities and dreams. In this way we can keep him alive in our minds. Maybe we have to remember the traditional last slide of his presentations: a view over Cape Town bay from Table Mountain on a sunny day; relaxing and peaceful, but also inspiring and fascinating.

It is not length of life, but depth of life.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

REFERENCES

- 1 Bolliger CT, Probst R, Tschopp K, *et al.* Silicon-Endoprothesen in der Behandlung von tracheo-bronchialen Stenosen. Bericht über die ersten 12 von uns mit der Methode behandelten Patienten [Silicone endoprosthesis in the treatment of tracheobronchial stenosis. Report of the first 12 patients treated with this method]. *Schweiz Med Wochenschr* 1991; 121: 1283–1288.
- 2 Bolliger C, Nader D, Herth F, *et al.* Prospective international trial of endobronchial implantation of electromagnetic fiducials for real-time tracking of lung tumors during radiotherapy (RT). European Society Congress. September 2012. P1389.
- 3 Bolliger CT, Jordan P, Solèr M, *et al.* Exercise capacity as a predictor of postoperative complications in lung resection candidates. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 1995; 151: 1472–1480.
- 4 Bolliger CT. A wind of change. *Respiration* 1998; 65: 2–3.