Jesper Swedenborg in Memoriam

Professor Jesper Swedenborg, the former leader of vascular surgery at Karolinska, died at the age of 76 on December 2nd, 2016.

Jesper received his medical degree at Karolinska Institutet in 1967, trained in general surgery in Sundsvall and at Sabbatsbergs hospital, and in vascular surgery at Karolinska and University of Rochester, USA, under Charles Robb och Seymour Schwartz. He got his PhD in experimental surgery in 1971, became docent in 1976 and professor of surgery in 1998. Jesper started a translational research lab at the Department of Experimental Surgery with a focus on vessel wall thrombogenicity in association with surgical procedures and led the development of a method to covalently link heparin to artificial surfaces together with Per Olsson and Olle Larm, an invention today utilized in clinical practice on devices such as vascular grafts and stent grafts. He later turned the lab into a strong platform for translational studies of vascular biology and his own research focus more and more towards aneurysm disease and atherosclerosis. His dedication to strengthen translational research within the discipline of vascular surgery also made him arrange a series of international symposia under the title ‘Bringing basic science into clinical practice’, an appreciated event that over 10 years covered peripheral vascular disease, aneurysms, carotid disease and stroke, diabetic vascular disease, and vascular trauma and attracted delegates to Stockholm from the whole world. Jesper was also co-founder and instrumental in biobanking of vascular tissue samples from patients with aneurysm disease and carotid stenosis (BiKE), today powerful resources for translational research. He led several students to their PhDs and his last PhD student graduated no longer than four years ago.

Jespers leadership was essential in creating the atmosphere that our research group still cherish and benefit from. His powerful intellect and yet gentle personality has given us all the necessary means to maintain a strong belief in translational research and worship his mission to ‘bring basic science into clinical practice’.

On behalf of the Vascular Surgery Research Group at CMM, Ulf Hedin