Dr Richard Vincent Hodder

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We all were deeply shocked to learn about the sudden death of Dr Richard (Rick) Hodder.

We have wanted to invite Rick Hodder to Poland ever since we met him for the first time at one of his lectures at the European Respiratory Society (ERS) Annual Congress held in Munich, Germany, in 2006. The opportunity came during preparations for the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations Conference and TPChA (Society of Friends of Asthmatic Patients) Conference – that was how our e-mail correspondence began.

While preparing his lecture, Dr Hodder sought answers to issues concerning conditions and treatment options for asthma and COPD patients in Poland. He had questions on the availability of tiotropium, legal regulations and statistics on the smoking ban in Poland, pulmonary rehabilitation as well as whether asthma patients were treated by a general practitioner or a pulmonologist, and many more.

One day before the official opening date of the conference, which was held June 25 to 28, 2008 in Warsaw, Rick Hodder delivered a lecture for specially invited pulmonologists and another for all guests during the conference. Both of his talks were meticulously prepared and, at the same time, very interesting and witty. It was then that we purchased his book *Every Breath I Take: A Guide to Living with COPD*, co-written with Susan Lightstone. We also received the author's consent to translate it and, last year, when the translation and fundraising for publishing the book was coming to an end, Rick Hodder agreed to write a preface to the Polish edition. He did not get that opportunity. He died on April 17, 2012. The book was published in Poland in November 2012.

Born in Toronto, Ontario, in 1946, Dr Hodder completed his MSc in Astrophysics from York University (Toronto, Ontario) in 1972 and was, for a brief time, a scholar with the National Research Council studying radio astronomy. He eventually switched to medicine and graduated from the University of Toronto (Toronto) in 1975. He completed his residency training in internal medicine and critical care in both Toronto and Auckland, New Zealand, before completing his Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) certifications in internal medicine (1981) and Respiriology (1982) in Toronto.

Dr Hodder joined the Ottawa Hospital (Ottawa, Ontario) in 1982 as a staff respirologist and intensivist. Dr Hodder established the Critical Care Program at the Ottawa Hospital and was the first Chief of the Department of Critical Care. He served as Professor of Medicine at the University of Ottawa, was a former medical advisor to the Lung Association of Ottawa Carleton and was past President of the Ontario Thoracic Society. In 2005, Dr Hodder was appointed as Canada's first Chief Examiner for Critical Care Medicine by the RCPSC and, in 2010, the RCPSC appointed Dr Hodder with Founder Status in Critical Care Medicine.

Dr Hodder is the author or co-author of more than 100 publications, numerous scientific articles and conference abstracts.

Many of his publications concerned practical aspects of asthma and COPD treatment, for instance, choosing the correct inhaler based on four questions asked when prescribing medications: 1. For the chosen drug(s), what devices are available and what is the fewest number of

Dr Richard Hodder

device types that can be used? 2. What device is the patient likely to use properly (given the patient's age and ability)? 3. How can I ensure that the correct inhaler technique will be taught to the patient? 4. Which devices are affordable/reimbursable for the patient and what are his preferences? Dr Hodder promoted the activation of COPD patients. He believed that physical activity improved the patient's mental state. He encouraged them to rent rooms (eg, in shopping malls where they could perform pulmonary rehabilitation). He also emphasized the need for 'teamwork' in a way that every patient should have their own 'support team' consisting of family members, friends, a general practitioner, a pulmonologist, a social worker and an educator. The team's importance grows together with the development of the illness and, when the

patient's state progresses to a palliative stage, the team becomes indispensable. Dr Hodder is the author of a chapter (The role of collaborative self-management in pulmonary rehabilitation) in a book titled *Pulmonary Rehabilitation*.

He also saw an important role of a nurse-educator in the treatment of patients applying inhaled medications, due to the improper use of inhalers. He was interested in patient primary care. Apart from patient education, he also focused on doctor's education. He coauthored the European Anesthesiologist Training Program. As an anesthesiologist, he worked on the efficiency of asthma treatment in intensive care conditions, for patients requiring a respirator as well as those with pneumonia or general infections. Dr Hodder coauthored many more Canadian directives concerning asthma and COPD treatment. He also participated in numerous clinical trials of pulmonary medications and research on respiratory diseases.

Rick's colleagues at The Ottawa Hospital have established a memorial fund in his name to support Rick's passion for medical education.

The cover of *Every Breath I Take: A Guide to Living with COPD* provides a few simple questions worth answering. 1. Do you smoke currently, or have you smoked cigarettes? 2. Do you cough regularly? 3. Do you bring up mucus regularly? 4. Do even simple chores make you breathless? 5. Do you get frequent colds that persist longer than those of other people you know? If you answer "yes" to two or more of these questions, you should ask your doctor to test you for COPD. Perhaps they should also constitute a type of a 'preliminary questionnaire' to help patients make a decision as to whether they should visit a doctor.

Dr Hodder was an exceptional doctor, an invaluable teacher and an amazing person. He will be remembered by his coworkers, his patients and all those who had the honour of meeting him personally.

We would like to end this memorial of Dr R Hodder with an entry in his memorial guest book (1): "Rick's *joie de vivre* was legendary. I will remember him for his great sense of humour, colourful tie collection and his generous wisdom" (Janis Hass, Ottawa, Ontario).

REFERENCE

1. www.legacy.com/guestbooks/ottawacitizen/guestbook.aspx?n=richard-hodder&pid=157304837&cid=full (This Guest Book will remain online until 28/04/2013)

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