



Faculty
of Medicine

Department
of Pharmacology



Prof. Jiří Lenfeld, M.D., Ph.D.

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Professor of Pharmacology at the Faculty of Medicine at Palacký University in Olomouc, Jiří Lenfeld, M.D. was born in 1924. His name is associated with the development of Czech pharmacology in the second half of the 20th century, to which he greatly contributed.

prof. Lenfeld was one of the most popular teachers at the Faculty of Medicine at Palacký University for more than 40 years. Thanks to his charisma, coupled with his profound expertise and his excellent oratory, he was able to bring his field closer to his students, and his lectures were widely attended, even optional seminars that took place late in the afternoon. He was also a diligent writer of university textbooks – he took the view that, besides scientific publishing and lecturing in the field, the obvious responsibility of every university teacher was the writing of textbooks.

Jiří Lenfeld was a native of Brno. He was the son of Jan Lenfeld, D.V.M., a university professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Masaryk University, who died untimely in 1939. After graduating from the gymnasium in 1943, and following two years of so-called „total deployment“ (in fact forced labour for occupants), when he was employed as a worker in various factories (Brno, Zlín), Lenfeld enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at Masaryk University in Brno in 1945-1950. At that time, as a first-year physician, he began work as a demonstrator and later as an assistant at the Department of Pharmacology at this medical faculty. He remained faithful to pharmacology not only throughout his studies, but also after his graduation in 1950, when he decided to remain at the Department of Pharmacology as Assistant Professor. His decision to devote his lifelong attention to pharmacology was undoubtedly influenced by the then head of the Department of Pharmacology in Brno, prof. Jiří Štefl, M.D., and also by his second teacher, Associate Professor of Pharmacology Sajner, M.D., later professor of the history of medicine at the Faculty of Medicine at Masaryk University.

In 1953, Jiří Lenfeld, M.D., moved from Brno to Olomouc to

take over the leadership of the Department of Pharmacology at the Faculty of Medicine, Palacký University following the untimely death of Hedvika Zemánková-Kunzová, M.D. At that time, only two assistants – MUC Lambert Klabusay and MUC Mario Kroutil – headed the Department of Pharmacology at the Faculty of Medicine in Olomouc. From October 1953, Dr. Lenfeld gave lectures in pharmacology, and these lectures were so outstanding that it made the subject of pharmacology attractive to a great number of students, and hence the department was filled with new demonstrators and volunteers. The new head of the institute offered each student applicant an appropriate topic of research work, and he did not restrict anyone from taking part in this initiative. Several of those enthusiasts then decided to work in pharmacology after graduating and, therefore, over the next four years, the staffing of the department gradually stabilised. Lenfeld's habilitation in pharmacology in 1957, his appointment as Professor of Pharmacology (1966), and other academic positions he held, undoubtedly contributed to the prestige of the department. At Palacký University, he was Vice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine for dentistry direction (1961-1962), Dean of the Faculty of Medicine (1962-1966) and Vice Rector of Palacký University for pedagogical issues (1966-1969). The main reason for the department's good reputation was, however, the extensive scientific research and pedagogical publishing activity which prof. Lenfeld did not neglect, even when burdened with work for the faculty and the university – commitment which he also demanded uncompromisingly from his co-workers.

The main research topic of the department was the pharmacology of inflammation, and later, the pharmacology of inflammatory pain. In 1961, Lenfeld and Kroutil's book *Pharmacotherapy of Inflammation*, that summarised a substantial part of the department's work, was published. It had also been published earlier in a series of partial notices. This monograph was well received. In cooperation with the research laboratory *Farmacon* (Čtvrtník, M.Sc.) and the Research Department for Pharmacology and Biochemistry in Prague, the department also partici-

pated in the development of new pyrazolidine derivatives from phenylbutazone, the most famous of which is the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug kebuzone, which has been produced for many years. Prof. Lenfeld co-authored a patent for the procedure for the synthesis of Kebuzone. The anti-inflammatory activity of plant-derived substances (*Conyza canadensis* and benzophenanthridine alkaloids from *celandine*) was also evaluated at the department.

Especially significant in prof. Lenfeld's life is a twenty-year period of normalisation (1970-1989). During that time, prof. Lenfeld was deprived of the opportunity to head up the Department of Pharmacology, he was not permitted to perform any public duties, or to be a committee member of the Czechoslovak Pharmacological Society, and was discriminated against in various ways for political reasons, being seen as a 'right-wing opportunist'. His co-workers at the department were affected in a similar way. Nevertheless, we can evaluate this twenty-year period as a time of very intense professional activity by Lenfeld. During 1970, he wrote, together with his four assistants, a three-part textbook about general and special pharmacology, which was published in a completely revised third edition (with a total of 1076 pages), first in the editorial centre at Palacký University and later, in 1973 and 1974, in the state pedagogical publishing house. From these textbooks, which were very well received at that time, medics were studying pharmacology at virtually all faculties of medicine in Czechoslovakia in the first and second half of the seventies. At the beginning of the seventies, the management of the pharmaceutical factory Galena, offered prof. Lenfeld professional cooperation in the development of new drugs. From 1971 to 1989, prof. Lenfeld and his colleagues participated in the preclinical evaluation of a total of 27 medicinal products that were put into production by Galena, n. p. during this period. At that time, prof. Lenfeld also cooperated with Olomouc medical examiners as a member of an expert committee which assessed alleged therapeutic misconduct. With the findings from the work of this committee, and his cooperation with the medical examiners, he was able to teach pharmacology in a tactful way and later host seminars in clinical pharmacology.

In 1978, prof. Lenfeld edited the collective monograph of the department, entitled 'Theoretical basis of pharmacotherapy of inflammations', which summarised the research findings of the department from the period 1961-1977. In this monograph, he himself wrote an extensive introductory chapter. This year was also significant in that the first clinical pharmacology departments were established in Czechoslovakia, and clinical pharmacology had begun to be considered as a separate clinical field. In the same year, prof. Lenfeld responded to these considerations by starting to teach clinical pharmacology to medics from higher years in the form of optional seminars at the Faculty of Medicine at Palacký University in Olomouc. These seminars were received with extraordinary interest by students. He also invited physicians from various clinical disciplines to participate in the discussion and exchange of views. One of these seminars, with the participation of medical examiners, was also annually dedicated, between the years of 1978 and 1987, to so-called therapeutic misconduct. He also supported the seminar by writing a total of four 'mini-textbooks' for students, which were published repeatedly in two to three revised editions during

the period 1982-1987. The titles of these mini-textbooks depict the topics on which the clinical pharmacology seminars focused: 'Introduction to clinical pharmacology of pain and inflammation' {1982, 1983, 1986, 40 pages}; 'Effective prescription of drugs and efficacy of therapy' (1982, 1984, 28 pages); 'Developmental pharmacology' (1984, 1986, 41 pages); and 'Receptor theory in clinical pharmacology' (1984, 1987, 40 pages).

prof. Lenfeld was the first to lecture in clinical pharmacology, and this took place in 1982 at the 32nd Pharmacological Days Conference in Tábors (Čs. fyziol. 1983; 32: 152). I believe he was the first not only to be interested in the education of clinical pharmacology at the Czech faculties of medicine, but also to realise it. His relationship to clinical pharmacology is expressed in the conclusion of the summary of his lecture in 1982: 'For the emergence and further activity of clinical pharmacology, it is necessary to actively create conditions both in clinical practice and in the field of pharmacology. Even an experimental pharmacologist should not be distant from clinical thinking. It is much needed for our pharmacotherapy to be truly scientific and therefore expedient and optimal'. In 1982, the ministry formulated the concept of clinical pharmacology, and a number of workplaces in this field were established in larger hospitals. After 1990, the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the Czech Pharmacological Society was established, and at that time, faculties of medicine in the Czech Republic introduced the education of clinical pharmacology as a compulsory option field. However, our students still vainly await the release of the much-needed textbook on clinical pharmacology.

In 1986, a Department of Clinical Pharmacology was established at Olomouc University Hospital, which was headquartered at the Department of Pharmacology at the Faculty of Medicine, Palacký University, and prof. Lenfeld was appointed its Head. In order to fulfil one of the tasks of this department (which was formed in 1987), i.e. the postgraduate training of physicians from Faculty Hospital, prof. Lenfeld published a magazine entitled 'Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacy Newsletter', which later gained nationwide registration, and in 1999 changed its name to 'Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacy'. In 2003, the production of this magazine was transferred to the publishing house Solen.

The broader public had the opportunity to get to know prof. Lenfeld from the two seven-part television series 'Human and Medicine' (1982) and 'Pain' (1988). He not only wrote the screenplays but was also a protagonist in these programmes. The realisation of these series challenged Ostrava TV due to the difficulties prof. Lenfeld experienced during his period of normalisation.

In 1990, prof. Lenfeld was fully rehabilitated, and from January 1 of that year, he became the head of the institute again. However, in October 1990, he resigned from this position to become a full-time professor and devote himself to his favourite pedagogical and literary activities. His plans, however, completely changed with the malignant illness that he bravely fought from the summer of 1991 for almost three years. Even during that time, he worked as much as possible (he wrote a screenplay for the teaching programme 'Antagonism at the benzodiazepine receptor

level' in 1993) and lectured to students about the topics he had chosen himself. In April 1992, it was a lecture which he titled 'Cytostatics - as I experienced myself'. In co-operation with MUCOS Pharma CZ, we released a short version of this lecture on CD at a commemorative evening to mark the occasion of the 75th birthday of the late professor in 1999.

prof. Lenfeld was one of the prominent personalities of Czech pharmacology at Palacký University and its Faculty of Medicine. Everyone who had the opportunity to work with him, and those who met him as students with his teacher, remembers him with respect.

Jaroslav Jezdinský

"Representatives of all medical disciplines think, and in their lectures they emphasize, that their discipline is the most important. We, pharmacologists, we never say that. It is true in our field." (Statement from Prof. Lenfeld's lecture in 1989, recorded by Prof. Opavský.)