



Obituary: Peter Ormerod

Peter Ormerod has died at the age of 68. A past president of the British Thoracic Society (BTS), his research helped define drug treatment, public health measures and a national strategy to reduce tuberculosis (TB) in the UK. These guidelines adopted nationally were also regarded internationally as the definitive standards. Given that he was working as a general physician in a busy district general hospital (Blackburn Royal Infirmary, later the Royal Blackburn Hospital), his achievements were quite remarkable.

Lawrence Peter Ormerod was born in Rossendale, Lancashire on 28 August 1950, the oldest of three sons of Milton and Dorothy Ormerod. He attended Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School where his father taught chemistry.

He attended the University of Manchester Medical School and graduated with an intercalated BSc in Pharmacology and MB ChB with honours in 1974. After training posts in Manchester, he passed the MRCP examination in April 1977 and then worked at East Birmingham Hospital for a year. He returned to Manchester as a senior registrar at North Manchester General Hospital. He was appointed consultant physician in general and respiratory medicine taking up the post in 1981 whilst only 30 years old. He finally retired in 2012.

At the time of his appointment and there were about 250 new cases of TB a year in Blackburn. This high incidence was one of the reasons he chose to work in Blackburn, his passion for the subject having been fuelled by him having had a tuberculous neck gland at the age of 7. Peter set up a new system for contact tracing and control that quickly achieved a substantial reduction in disease incidence. He took this opportunity to undertake clinical research in this field and was awarded his MD doctorate by the University of Manchester in 1984. This was followed by a prodigious amount of published work describing the disease, its control and treatment. He also took a very active role in the day-to-day general medical responsibilities required in his post and with the onset of the AIDS outbreak he soon became expert in its management, particularly from the respiratory point of view.

He was awarded FRCP London in 1990 and Fellow of The Royal College of Physicians (FRCP) of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Colleges in 2010. In 2000, he was awarded a DSc (Med) by the University of Manchester and a personal chair in Respiratory Medicine by the University of Central Lancashire. A personal chair in Respiratory Medicine at Manchester University followed in 2011. He served on several committees for the BTS, in particular the joint TB Committee from 1987 to 2016 as member, secretary and chairman. He also served on the research committee, the Standards of Care Committee and the BTS MDRTB Forum. Other national committee work included expert guidance to the Department of Health, the Public Health

Laboratory Service, the British National Formulary and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. In 2008, he was elected president of the British Thoracic Society and in 2017 received the prestigious BTS medal.

He contributed as a clinical advisor to National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, gave seven named lectures to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Royal Society of Medicine, published over 100 peer-reviewed scientific papers on TB, wrote 17 book chapters, coauthored a book and contributed to various national guidelines. His reputation was both national and international. He was frequently contacted by consultants from all over the country for advice on the management of cases of TB, such that his office was nicknamed 'TB helpline'.

He was very supportive of those he worked with, be it fellow consultants, doctors in training, nursing or clerical staff. He maintained a very professional approach to his work, always being trusted to do the 'right thing'. His clinical expertise and memory were somewhat legendary and he was always pleased to give help to his colleagues.

Away from medicine, he had a passion for cricket, his knowledge of which was encyclopaedic. He played for Rostherne, Cheshire and established a reputation as a tricky bowler. He enjoyed reading history, particularly of the Napoleonic wars and the Duke of Wellington.

On the first day of his retirement, he suffered a cerebral haemorrhage causing left hemiparesis. He recovered sufficiently to drive and continue some committee work but began to notice increasing difficulty with speech and mobility. He was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in September 2017.

He was married to Pauline who was a friend from school days. She survives him with a son Adam, daughter Heather and four grandchildren.

Lawrence Peter Ormerod MB ChB BSc MD DSc FRCP

Born 28 August 1950, died 29 January 2019.

Nigel Horsfield.

Nigel Horsfield

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