

Obituary

Gerald Henry Ungar MBChB FACRM Dip Phys Med

Dr Gerald Ungar, a specialist in rehabilitation medicine (spinal injuries), died on 31 December 1991 aged 61 in Melbourne, Australia. He was born on 21 July 1930 in Vienna, Austria and migrated with his parents and sister to the United Kingdom at the time of the Anschluss. He graduated in medicine from the University of Liverpool in 1955 and after preregistration positions in Nottingham and Ormskirk he spent two years in the Royal Air Force before taking a position as junior medical hospital officer at the National Spinal Injuries Centre, Stoke Mandeville Hospital. He decided on a career in physical medicine and rehabilitation and trained at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford and St Stephen's Hospital, London. After a further three years as a specialist in physical medicine with the Royal Air Force, he returned to the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital to specialise in the management of patients with spinal cord injuries. He did a secondment as locum consultant in charge of the Liverpool Regional Paraplegic Centre at Southport and in 1974 migrated to Australia to join the Victoria Spinal Injuries Unit as deputy director, a position he held until his death.

Dr Ungar was a founder member of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia (July 1961) and a fellow of the Australasian College of Rehabilitation Medicine. He was for many years a member of the advisory committee on the needs of the handicapped of the city of Doncaster and Templestowe and a member of the Knox Spastic Society.

During his period in the Victorian Spinal Injuries Unit he built up excellent rapport with patients and was of great assistance to the director and other staff members. He made a significant contribution to the deve-

lopment of the unit during this period, and attracted a wide circle of patients and colleagues who respected his experience, and friends who appreciated his sincerity, good humour and friendliness.

He was a devoted husband and father to his daughter, Nicky and his severely disabled son, Ricky. He lavished much care and attention upon the latter, but still had compassion for others in need. He was ever ready to listen to and help his patients and friends. He will be long remembered by many whose lives were touched personally by him in the course of medical care. With various colleagues he published a number of important articles in respected journals for the betterment of spinal cord patients. He was a man of many interests including sailing, gliding, motor cars and amateur radio and he played both the piano and recorder by ear.

Ill health forced him to stop work in August 1991 and he died quietly and with dignity four months later. His son predeceased him in 1985. He will be missed by his wife, Elsa and daughter, Nicky. His death has left a void for many patients who have come to depend upon him over the years.

A man of great self control and patience, his deep love and compassion for his fellow man has set an example and a standard of care for all to follow. Those touched by his kindness and his humour will be forever in his debt.

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