

In Honor of an Outstanding Role Model

For most people, the designation "Swedish" is likely to conjure up immediate word associations. Alfred Nobel's dynamite and his prizes come to mind; or Ikea and Ingmar Bergman movies; and of course Volvos and Saabs in spite of General Motors and Ford involvement. However, if you are a prosthodontist or in another specialty that does preprosthetic surgery, the name which comes to mind is Per-Ingvar Brånemark's. The genesis of osseointegration and its early nurturing are the results of his pioneering research activities, which have dramatically revolutionized the treatment of complete and partial edentulism as well as the management of maxillofacial deficits.

In May of this year, Dr Brånemark celebrated his 75th birthday and this Journal wants our readership to recognize the profound respect that we, the prosthodontic community, have for this scholar. The world of academia has already acknowledged P-I's contributions through numerous honorary degrees, prizes, awards, and international honors. Our recognition may be belated, but it is certainly deserved and opportune. After all, his is really a very remarkable story that deserves succinct repetition. Like most scientists working on the frontiers of knowledge, he used what must have appeared at the time to be uncertain techniques and materials, often with inadequately controlled conditions. He also encountered many events that could have invalidated his data, but he persisted in his thematic assumptions. Luckily, for us and our patients, he succeeded in introducing a treatment concept that harnesses the body's healing response induced by a scrupulous surgical protocol; chose a specific micro- and macroscopic dental implant surface design for a very specific alloplastic material; and reconciled each clinical step with a time-dependent and site-specific interval of healing in situ before occlusal loading was permitted. The rest, as is often said, is history.

I first met Tomas Albrektsson in the late 70s while he was one of Brånemark's many stellar PhD students. I

had visited P-I's laboratory to obtain firsthand insights into his early clinical work in osseointegration and we quickly became good friends as the emerging impact of the applied research rapidly worked its way into our traditional mindsets. So here we both are, over a quarter century later, trying to repeat our original experience and offer our readers a contemporary glimpse of P-I's scientific rearview mirror. We emailed him a series of questions which we felt a young researcher might ask him today. They were not that different from what Tomas and I had originally posed to him in 1977 in the Department of Experimental Anatomy in Gothenburg. They were questions about how and when the notion of osseointegration started; about his experiences growing up in southern Sweden; about the progression of change and influences in his life; and finally his retrospective view about the current status of his own scientific breakthrough. P-I's answers did not necessarily follow our scripted queries, an inevitable reminder of his prodigious lateral thinking capacity rather than following a linear pattern. Nonetheless, his stream-of-consciousness remarks provide fascinating insights that impact many current prosthodontic and surgical concerns.

This is our first IJP interview effort. We hope you will appreciate our conviction that journals such as ours should not only publish scientific papers, but also have a responsibility to bring extraordinary individuals such as Per-Ingvar Brånemark closer to our readership. And above all, we should join together once in a while to recognize and honor outstanding role models and wish them long life, happiness, and much serenity on such a special birthday.



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