

Perspectives from the International Community: NIDR, NIDCR, and Beyond

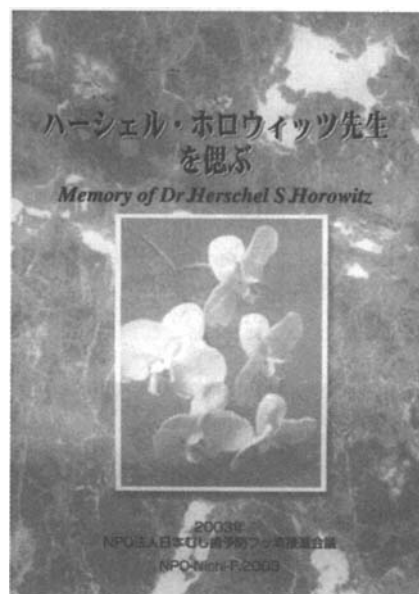
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Extending the condolences of the international oral health community to Hersh's family, friends, and colleagues is no easy task for me. The sheer number of lives Hersh touched around the world seems incomprehensible, let alone the diversity of languages represented by the messages people have sent. This particular memorial to Hersh from his friends and colleagues in Japan perhaps epitomizes how deeply felt is the sorrow, but also the admiration and respect of his many contributions to public oral health in a nation in which Hersh served as a US Army dentist very early in his career. In this special issue there are testimonies and articles describing Hersh as "a fearless fluoridation fighter ... a great spirit" in Japan and around the world. As Dr. Toshinobu Matsuo of the Nagasaki Fluoridation Society wrote, "Your message will be our future ... goodbye (sayonara) to my public health godfather" (1).

While Hersh traveled and contributed his warmth and his expertise in many countries of the world through multilateral and multinational organizations both in the public and private sectors, he was fortunate to be able to serve his nation as a Public Health Service officer and later in his career as a private consultant to both public health agencies and private sector organizations.

Professor George Davies, formerly the vice-chancellor of the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, who served as a mentor to many of us working in international health, recalled for me his memories of Hersh in the context of the World Health Organization and the Fédération Dentaire Internationale (Davies G, personal communication, Queensland, Australia, Oct 4, 2003). In the mid-1950s, George served as chairman of the FDI Commission on Classification

FIGURE 1
Memory of Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz
(1)



and Statistics for Oral Conditions (COCSTOC). That commission had developed and published in 1962 a document entitled, "Standardization of Reporting Dental Diseases and Conditions."

Soon after, David Barmes was appointed as the oral epidemiologist in the Oral Health Unit of the WHO—David had appointed both George and Hersh as consultants to draft "Oral Health Surveys—Basic Methods" (2).

They recognized that it was one thing to draft a manual in the splendid isolation of Geneva and quite another to know whether people in various parts of the world with varied training and experience could read it and understand it sufficiently well to be able to apply its recommendations, producing reproducible and comparable results. They decided to subject the draft manual to field trials. George

FIGURE 2
Dr. Toshinobu Matsuo, Dr. Alice Horowitz, and Dr. Hersh Horowitz
(left to right) (1)



FIGURE 3

World Health Organization Expert Committee on Standardization and Reporting, 1961 (Professor George Davies and Dr. John Knutson, left to right) (Photo courtesy of G. Davies)

**FIGURE 4**

Some Members of the Field Testing Team for Oral Health Surveys—Basic Methods, 1st Edition: Rosemary Davies, Unknown, Unknown, Alice Horowitz, Valerie Davies, Hersh Horowitz (left to right) (Photo courtesy of G. Davies)

**FIGURE 5**

Field Testing in Fiji (Hersh Horowitz as Examiner, Patient Unknown, Alice Horowitz as Recorder) (left to right) (Photo courtesy of G. Davies)



took a sabbatical from the University of Queensland to come to work with Hersh in San Francisco, where Hersh was then head of epidemiology at the Dental Health Center, part of the former Division of Dental Health.

George as examiner, his wife, Val, and daughter, Rosemary, acted as recorders and began the project in Fiji and Tonga, where local indigenous practitioners examined with George following the manual guidance criteria and methods. Hersh and Alice joined them in Tahiti, where local dentists, George, and Hersh examined the same subjects with Alice as a recorder. This was a happy occasion, indeed, not only professionally, but because it was Hersh and Alice's honeymoon! Who else would choose to spend their honeymoon as a working holiday but this very special couple?

George's rendition of this and other experiences reflected the joy, the friendship, and the productive research output with articles having appeared in the *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, the *Journal of Periodontal Research*, as well as the first WHO "Oral Surveys—Basic Methods Manual." At this moment in time, the manual is being revised after four subsequent editions ... this legacy continues to be nourished and refined and used in more than 100 countries around the globe (3).

There are many stories surrounding Hersh's legacies, including my personal ones—for he was my mentor in the Division of Dental Health when I joined the Social Studies Branch in 1964. One of my first publications related to oral epidemiology was made possible because of Hersh and his team, who were then located in the Woodmont Building in Bethesda. We had an interest in learning whether clinical indicators and social and behavioral indicators of occlusal appearance had any relationship. To our knowledge, no one had asked those questions before and we started to look at children selected for a study on dental caries to see if they even recognized differential orofacial appearances (4,5). We had great fun exploring this newly emerging field of the sociodental sciences and oral epidemiology and subsequently as working colleagues became fast and lasting friends.

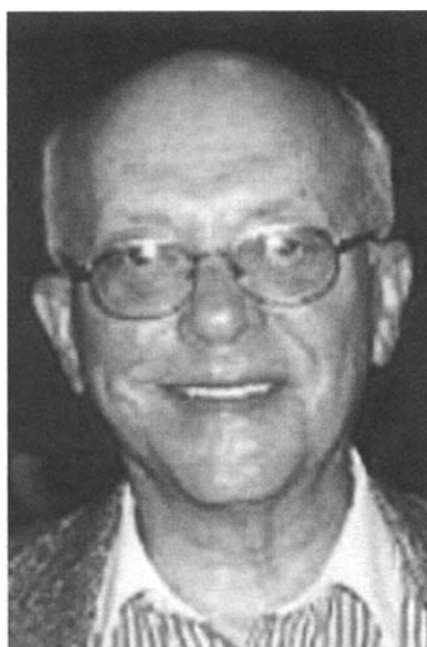
I could tell you more stories, but this isn't my personal memoir ... and there

are two other perspectives from speakers here who will give you more of the flavor of Hersh as a colleague and a friend.

Dr. Saskia Estupiñán-Day is a public health dentist responsible for oral health in the Pan American Health Organization, the regional arm of the WHO for the Americas. As regional advisor for oral health, Saskia works with the ministries of health in 35 member states in Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States, and she worked closely with Hersh throughout her 10-year tenure in this role.

Dr. Kim Johng-Bai has traveled a very long way to be with us to honor Hersh. Professor Kim will tell us about Hersh's seminal contributions to dental public health in South Korea as they worked together and with many faculty and students to catalyze research as well as preventive dentistry programs in that nation. Professor Kim was graduated from the College of Dentistry at Seoul National University, receiving his DDS, MSD, and PhD

FIGURE 6
Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz, ca. 2002-03



there. He has risen through the academic ranks to be professor and head of the Preventive and Public Health Dentistry Department at Seoul National University ... the father of those subjects in South Korea. Currently, he is the director of the Institute of National Oral Health and serves as the president of the Korean Industrial Dental Health Institute.

References

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