

# Henry M. Wisniewski – fond memories

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Henry was born in Poland in 1931 and received his medical degrees there. He worked in George Olzowski's neuroanatomy/neuropathology laboratory at the University of Toronto in 1961–62, and from Canada he went to Igor Klatzo's group at the National Institute for Neurological Diseases and Stroke in Bethesda in 1962–63. There he worked on cerebral edema, the blood-brain barrier, and ultimately on aluminum toxicity. That was where we connected. In 1962, Klatzo had reported at a meeting in Lima, Peru, that intra-thecal injection of aluminum hydroxide in rabbits caused intraneuronal edema in the form of vacuoles. Nicholas Gonatas and I had been looking at the ultrastructure of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease at that time and were taken by the possibility of an animal model. I applied Klatzo's technique and found not vacuoles but masses of filaments which looked rather like tangles. I immediately called Klatzo, who told me that his Polish fellow (HMW) had used silver stains and thought he saw tangles, but Igor considered this as an artefact. He was soon persuaded by the EM pictures.

Well, I offered Henry a fellowship to come to the Einstein College of Medicine and continue these aluminum studies, but the Immigration and Naturalization Service insisted that he return to Poland. The next time we met was three years later in November, 1966, when Henry arrived at the New York airport carrying two cages of rabbits with chronic aluminum encephalopathy. It soon became apparent that the aluminum lesions were significantly different from those in Alzheimer disease (AD), so we pretty much dropped the project. The chronically treated rabbits developed clusters of abnormal (dystrophic?) neurites, but amyloid did not appear and there were no PHF.

Henry was an extraordinarily skilled experimental surgeon. He could quickly do a laminectomy on a mouse or a monkey, craniotomies, cisternal punctures, and so on. They were all easy for him. He very quickly picked up the skills of EM operation. Furthermore, he was very helpful to other people in the lab, and col-

laborated very widely throughout the institution. He showed Roy Weller, visiting for a year from London, that intracisternal heavy silicon oil induced experimental non-inflammatory hydrocephalus better than the irritating kaolin previously used. He worked with Cedric Raine and John Prineas on new approaches to experimental allergic encephalomyelitis. He collaborated with Barry Bloom (now Dean at the Harvard School of Public Health) on immune (bystander) demyelination. So, Henry's interests even then in the sixties, were very broad. It wasn't just AD. Together we worked on aged animals as well as on AD.

We quickly became very close friends. He had arrived in New York several months before the Polish government allowed Krystina and the two boys to come to the States. So Henry used to come to my house to play with my infant son – he so missed his family. A few years later Henry dissected the boy's first fish. During those eight years together at Einstein, we seemed to agree on almost everything. We wrote many papers sitting at a table together with pen and single pad at hand. I could start a sentence and he could finish it. He would start a paragraph and I would develop it. I supplied most of the syntax but Henry provided many of the ideas. We did disagree in one area, and that had to do with my refusal to tell our fellows what to do and how to do it. At that time, at least, Henry wanted to be a micro-manager.

Henry and his family had several years of great difficulty with his visa. But the problem was finally resolved by someone in the office of Senator Javits.

I have always been chagrined by the fact that I failed to recognize Henry's remarkable administrative talent when we worked together. I was moderately surprised when the British Medical Research Council offered him the position in Newcastle, but amazed when he took the directorship on Staten Island and did so very well with it. But Henry's drive, originality and capacity for hard work had been readily apparent for a very long time. His remarkable career spanned many subjects, made great numbers of friends and admirers, and contributed extensively to neuropathology.