

## OBITUARY

**Professor Henrik Ekberg (1951–2012): a life as a symphony**

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Professor Henrik Ekberg passed away on 29 December 2012 quite unexpectedly while on holidays in Thailand. He was a well-respected transplant surgeon in Malmo and Professor of Transplant Surgery at Lund University in Sweden. Henrik Ekberg born in Bottnaryd, in 1951, graduated from Lund University in 1977, and received his doctor degree in medical science in 1986.

Professor Henrik Ekberg was not only a dedicated clinician but also a most curious and effective researcher with a focus on immunosuppression. His landmark paper entitled “Reduced exposure to calcineurin inhibitors in transplantation: ELITE-SYMPHONY Study” published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (2007) has been cited over 400 times and is one of the examples that international collaborations work and that through these collaborations major steps forward can be made [1]. By his enthusiasm and drive to find the best way to treat transplant patients he managed to set up this international study, to run the trial successfully, to get the data published in one of the lead journals, and finally to convince the transplantation community that less can be more when it comes to immunosuppressive therapy.

Beyond the scientific contributions, Henrik Ekberg played an instrumental part in the history, development, and growth of our Society and served ESOT many years as Councilor.

Henrik Ekberg was a passionate advocate of ESOT’s educational program between 2005 and 2007. He also enjoyed teaching at large at his home institutes in Malmo and Lund. His enthusiasm for education was also recognized in ESOT as under his leadership the

corner stone of our educational program was established. In the same period Henrik Ekberg was vice president for ESOT.

He was an active person; contributed to many other international collaborations including the European Best Practice Guidelines in Renal Transplantation and the KDI-GO guidelines.

Most recent years he was very active as councilor and treasurer, and became President Elect for the Transplantation Society.

When you met Henrik Ekberg at a transplantation meeting he was always friendly, surrounded by friends and colleagues: a charismatic person with the glasses typically placed on his head who enjoyed great respect amongst colleagues. He was a true leader in the international transplant community. Henrik Ekberg was a many-sided man and bridge builder, always active and looking for new opportunities and collaborations – typical features of the person who initiated the SYMPHONY study. These characteristics clearly contributed to his successes.

He will be sorely missed by so many.

Henrik Ekberg is survived by his wonderful partner Susan, his four children, and two grandchildren.

**Reference**

1. Ekberg H, Tedesco-Silva H, Demirbas A, *et al.* ELITE-Symphony Study. Reduced exposure to calcineurin inhibitors in renal transplantation. *N Engl J Med* 2007; **357**: 2562.