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In memory of Professor Peter Boyle (1951–2022)

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Professor Peter Boyle was a world-leading cancer researcher for nearly half a century. Although he is best known for his work at the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in Lyon, France (Centre International de Recherche sur le Cancer, CIRC), which he directed between 2004 and 2008, he also worked at the most important institutions involved in the fight against cancer: first at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, his hometown; then at Harvard University in Boston, USA; later at the European Oncology Institute in Milan, Italy (with Professor Umberto Veronesi); and finally, from 2009, at the International Prevention Research Institute (iPRI) in Lyon, France.

Professor Peter Boyle was a great friend of Poland and our scientific partner of long standing.

At the end of the 20th century, Witold Zatoński, Peter Boyle and other scientists wrote together the *Atlas of Cancer Mortality in Central Europe*. In 2004, we completed a monograph entitled *Tobacco, Science, Policy and Public Health*, published by Oxford University Press, which has become one of the seminal monographs on the fight against tobacco-related diseases globally.

In parallel, Professor Boyle led from its second edition the European Code Against Cancer, including in the scientific team among others Professor Witold Zatoński together with a select group of leading cancer researchers from all over the world. This work, also under the auspices of the World Health Organization, has become a key document on the fight against cancer worldwide.

At the beginning of the 21st century, together with Professor Boyle and Professor Wojtyła, we developed a strategy to fight against cancer in Poland, called the Warsaw Declaration. We handed it over to the then Polish Minister of Health and the Prime Minister. This study became the basis for the Polish National Cancer Prevention Programme 2006-2015.

The President of the Republic of Poland decorated Professor Peter Boyle with the Knight's Cross of the

Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland for his services to the health of the Polish nation.

In 2018, Professor Boyle signed a cooperation agreement with the Rector of the Calisia University. The Institute – European Observatory of Health Inequalities in Kalisz and Health Promotion Foundation (Nadarzyn) co-publisher of the *Journal of Health Inequalities* is giving us the opportunity to conduct research with the entire scientific world. It is a great honour for us that Professor Boyle was following us in strengthening the scientific programme of our university.

Sadly, after a few months of a vascular disease that affected him during the last few months, he passed away on the night of July 22-23, 2022 at his home in Lyon, France. Thank you for all your outstanding contributions, Peter.

Selected joint publications

1. Zatoński W, Smans M, Tyczyński J, Boyle P (eds.). *Atlas of Cancer Mortality in Central Europe*. IARC Scientific Publications No. 134. International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon 1996.
2. Boyle P, Gray N, Henningfield J, Seifin J, Zatoński W (eds.). *Tobacco: Science, Policy and Public Health*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010.
3. Boyle P, Autier P, Bartelnik H, Baselga J, Boffetta P, Burn J, Burns HJG, Christensen L, Denis L, Dicato M, Diehl V, Doll R, Franceschi S, Gillis CR, Gray N, Gričute L, Hackshaw A, Kasler M, Kogevinas M, Kvinnsland S, La Vecchia C, Levi F, McVie JG, Maisonneuve P, Martin-Moreno JM, Newton Bishop J, Oleari F, Perrin P, Quinn M, Richards M, Ringborg U, Scully C, Siracka E, Storm H, Tubiana M, Tursz T, Veronesi U, Wald N, Weber W, Zaridze DG, Zatoński W, zur Hausen H. *European Code Against Cancer and scientific justification: third version (2003)*. *Ann Oncol* 2003; 14: 973-1005.

SOME MEMORIES FROM PETER'S COLLEAGUES

"I regret that I have only known the professor for 10 years. We met when I was the head of the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO), based in London. By then, the professor had already authored numerous publications on the health care system in Africa. He knew exactly what African patients needed, and he understood their problems, the scarcity of pain-relieving drugs, the lack of cancer diagnostic equipment. I invited the professor to the IAPO congress in London. There, after direct discussions with patients – the congress participants – we prioritized the needs of African, Asian and South American patients. At subsequent meetings at the WHO General Assembly in Geneva we learned what further direction we should move in. The Memorandum of Understanding between the IAPO and iPRI in Lyon was just an effect of our joint activities. We enjoyed being together, it was the professor from whom I learned how to organize large conferences on an international scale, and how to raise funds for their organization. I sometimes flew to Lyon several times a year with Kawaldip Sehmi, CEO at IAPO. It is impossible to mention all the beautiful moments together, his kind heart that he used to open to his friends. You could say that his home in Dardilly was always open to those he liked. He loved sports, but I know nothing about that so I wasn't a good talker. He knew Polish football players better than I did. On the other hand, together with the professor I followed the routes of Lyon culinary excellence. I will miss the professor..."

Jolanta Bilińska

Director of Development and Social Communication City
Medical Center dr. Jonscher, Lodz,
Senior Teacher Calisia University,
President of Patients' Safety Foundation

"Peter was a giant in global oncology, an avid cancer prevention campaigner and a good man.

Born in Maryhill, Glasgow, Peter retained his wicked sense of Glasgow humour until the end – oh, and what was the football team he supported?! The Celts?

Hailing from the same town, I knew Peter and Helena in the late 70s, keeping in touch throughout the decades, enjoying their wonderful hospitality in Dardilly. Latterly, Peter kindly invited me to collaborate on some IPRI project work, a pleasure as the IPRI team mirrored the kind-hearted Peter.

Peter lived out his faith – he was kind and inclusive to all and extremely generous to the underserved. Helena, his wife and 3 truly delightful and clever daughters were his raison d'être. They joined in the celebrations when Peter was bestowed with the Royal Medal of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, by the Queen in 2017, a very proud moment."

Annie Young

Emerita Professor of Nursing Warwick Clinical Trials Unit,
Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick,
Coventry CV4 7AL I UK

*"I met Peter more than 30 years ago, at the IARC in Lyon. I was secretary of the EORTC Melanoma Group and we had decided to invest ourselves in melanoma prevention. A few of us went to meet melanoma epidemiologists gathered at the IARC to discuss our projects. This was incredibly productive, and I thus started a longstanding and fruitful collaboration with Peter. Upon this first occasion, we realised that both of us were living in Dardilly, a village in the hills north west of Lyon, and we became close friends. Our wives also became close friends. My wife Mireille, who did not even know how to sew, was convinced by Helena to join a patchwork group and converted herself into a real artist. For decades, we spent together Hogmanay to celebrate the new year. When Peter moved to Milan to create the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics of the European Institute of Oncology newly established by Veronesi, he invited me to work with him, and for about ten years, I frequently commuted between Lyon and Milan, by car, train or plane, and sometimes together with Peter. I more especially remember our way back to Lyon by car on the very day he was informed that he had just been elected as the future IARC Director: hopefully we were driven by professional drivers, otherwise it would have been impossible, as Peter was constantly answering calls on his cellular phone! I continued to work with him at the IARC, and later at the International Prevention Research Institute that he created. I learned much, in contact with him and the group of diverse and talented individuals that he gathered. I can fully understand the sentence from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry 'The greatness of a profession is perhaps, above all, to unite people', that he chose as a motto for his institute. But Peter was not only an excellent epidemiologist with a true insight and vision of the prevention field, and highest level contacts in the five continents, but he was also profoundly humane, showing kindness, care, and sympathy toward others, especially people in the developing countries, as shown by the documentary film *Cancer is Attacking Africa* that he co-produced with Cemil Alyanak. With his friends, he behaved as a true Scottish clan chieftain. When Mireille fell suddenly ill and died a few days later, he was especially supportive. He now lies in the same cemetery, a few meters from Mireille's tomb. I will never forget how much I owe to him."*

Jean-François Doré PhD

Inserm Emeritus Research Director

"Peter was an extraordinary scientist whose primary scientific aim was not the vanity of h-indexes but the improvement of public health worldwide, well beyond rich countries. All his life has been particularly devoted to the less fortunate of the world, whom he cherished. He had, indeed, a deep commitment to social justice, which derived from his profound faith and from his Scottish popular background. All "scientists with a heart", both small and giant, he met were his friends because he had a truly Italian

heart. And Italy remained forever in his heart. Being one of his postdocs and then collaborators has been a privilege, but the greatest joy has been his deep friendship.”

Alberto D’Onorfrio

Senior Researcher, University of Trieste, Department of Mathematics and Geosciences, Trieste (Italy)

“The beauty and grace of Peter Boyle is best demonstrated by his ability to bring people from various backgrounds together. I will always appreciate the meeting he held where young scientists, many in training, from Africa could meet and learn from famous scientists from Europe or America.”

Otis W. Brawley, MD, MACP, FRCP (L)

The Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins