

Biographical Sketch: Harald Tscherne, MD (1933–Present)

Richard A. Brand MD, Hans-Christoph Pape MD

Published online: 27 April 2013

© The Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons® 2013

Abstract This biographical sketch on Prof. Harald Tscherne corresponds to the historic text, *The Classic: Der Straßenunfall* [Traffic Accidents]. *Wien Med Wochenschr.* 1966;116:105–108 (Translated by Dr. Roman Pfeifer), available at DOI [10.1007/s11999-013-3012-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-013-3012-9).

Prof. Harald Tscherne (Fig. 1) was born in 1933 in Graz, Austria, the youngest of seven children. He trained under Prof. Maurice Müller and subsequently worked in the surgery department at the University of Graz. In 1970, he became the director of the trauma department of the newly founded Medical Graduate School of Hannover (Medizinische Hochschule Hannover) [1]. As the director, Prof. Tscherne established teams of healthcare professionals within the hospital to ensure continuity of care. His insight in trauma care led to the creation of external rescue teams with ambulance and helicopter services. In time, Prof. Tscherne established one of the world's premiere trauma centers, with large numbers of peers and visitors learning not only specific techniques of care, but also the system of care. According to Haas and Südkamp [1], 48 of his former trainees became directors of other clinics. PubMed® currently lists 448 articles with hundreds of coauthors. He has been an author or editor of 24 textbooks.



Fig. 1 Harald Tscherne is shown. (This image has been reproduced with permission from the A. O. Foundation.)

In 1979, Prof. Tscherne served as president of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Unfallchirurgie (German Trauma Association) and in 2000 as president of the European Society for Trauma and Emergency Surgery. He is a corresponding member of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association (United States) and an honorary member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Osteosynthesefragen (AO Foundation).

Prof. Tscherne trained a number of orthopaedic surgeons who have richly contributed to the literature on musculo-skeletal trauma, including Hans-Christoph Pape, professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Trauma at the University of Aachen Medical Center and Christian Krettek, director of the Department of Trauma Surgery at the Medical Graduate School of Hannover (Fig. 2).

This month's symposium is dedicated to Prof. Tscherne. For *The Classic*, we published a translation of one of his

R. A. Brand (✉)
Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research®,
1600 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA
e-mail: dick.brand@clinorthop.org

H.-C. Pape
Department of Orthopaedic Trauma, University of Aachen
Medical Center, Aachen, Germany

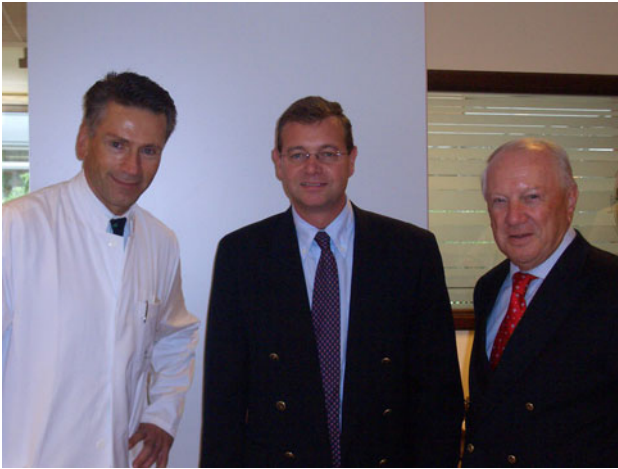


Fig. 2 Harald Tscherne (right) is shown with Profs. Christian Krettek (left) and Hans-Christophe Pape (middle), both of whom trained with Prof. Tscherne. Prof. Krettek succeeded Prof. Tscherne as Director of the Department of Orthopaedics and Trauma at the Hannover Medical School; Prof. Pape is Director of the Department of Orthopaedic Trauma and Reconstructive Surgery at Aachen University Hospital. (This image has been reproduced with permission from Prof. Pape.)

earliest articles, “Der Straßenunfall” [Traffic Accidents] [2]. “Numerous studies have demonstrated that 15% to 25% of traffic fatalities are preventable,” he wrote.

Prof. Tscherne recognized the importance of the pre-hospital treatment of these patients to save additional lives, and outlined a scheme for systematic care. While we might take these steps for granted today, systematic care of the seriously injured was not routine at the time: most articles focused on hospital or post-hospital care.

It is difficult to overestimate the role Prof. Tscherne played in major improvements to the care of trauma patients, from pre-hospital care and transport, to emergency care, to definitive care, and rehabilitation. Owing in part to the many people who trained with him or came under his influence, these improvements have been introduced worldwide. Countless patients have survived life- and limb-threatening injuries because of the systems Prof. Tscherne instituted and the methods he developed. Those patients and trauma surgeons everywhere owe him a debt of gratitude.

References

1. Haas NP, Südkamp N. A man with a vision—a tribute to Harald Tscherne. AO Foundation. Available at: https://www2.aofoundation.org/AOFileServer/PortalFiles?FilePath=/Extranet/en/_att/wor/act/Dialogue/2000_2/harald_tscherne.pdf. Accessed January 13, 2013.
2. Tscherne H. [Traffic accidents]. *Wien Med Wochenschr.* 1966;116: 105–108.