

Obituary

Philippe Bordier, M.D., 1927–1977

Philippe Bordier was recruited into bone research by André Lichtwitz whose enthusiasm and dynamism led to the establishment of a calcium and bone unit, supported by the Institut de Santé et de Recherche Médicale (INSERM). Though separated in years, similarities in experience and outlook had brought the two men together. Philippe had fought as a 17-year old volunteer in the Free French tank forces where Lichtwitz, already an experienced physician, had fought as a field, rather than as a medical officer. After the war, Philippe did university and medical studies and was graduated in 1955. He continued postgraduate work and in 1962 submitted a thesis on osteomalacia, a topic that would occupy him his entire professional career.

Formal studies notwithstanding, Philippe, like most researchers, was self-taught and self-directed. In 1964 he developed an instrument and procedure to sample iliac crest bone repeatedly in the same patient. These samples were then subjected to a series of histological studies which allowed Philippe to formulate hypotheses concerning osteoblast activity, osteoid mineralization, as evaluated by tetracycline staining, and the role played by osteocytes. Studies dealing with age and sex led him to differentiate between senile osteoporosis and that due to other causes. He then began studying in detail the natural history of postmenopausal osteoporosis and renal osteodystrophy and to evaluate the effect of a variety of therapeutic regimens.

Recognizing the importance of English so as to be able to communicate with non-French-speaking colleagues, he went to England in the late 60's and became sufficiently fluent not only to engage in intensive and productive collaborative work with laboratories throughout the world, but to write, with Howard Rasmussen, *The Physiological and Cellular Basis of Metaboloid Bone Disease*, a book that constitutes an important summary of the literature and offers novel interpretations and hypotheses.

Philippe's dynamism, warmth and friendliness and his selflessness made him a welcome visitor and participant in the many meetings the bone field has engendered. He was instrumental in organizing the first Phosphate Workshop in Paris in 1975 and he contributed to many meetings by his knowledge of bone structure and his wide-ranging studies of human material. In recent years he was particularly interested in renal osteodystrophy and his observations on the complex and varied morphological expressions associated with this disease and the invariant elevation of immunologically reactive parathyroid hormone constitute a corpus against which hypotheses of bone cell action and differentiation can and must be tested. His writings and presentations reflected his personality—an attempt to infuse into careful, static observations the excitement and passion of life.

His death came after a tragic year's illness, in which hope and despair alternated. His enthusiasm for life, research and medicine will be sorely missed.

Felix Bronner