

Karl-Heinz Schaller awarded with Franz Koelsch Medal 2009

Hans Drexler

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In 1967, the German Association for Occupational and Environmental Medicine endowed the Franz Koelsch Medal to honour outstanding contributions to the advancement of occupational medicine. Professor Franz Koelsch (1876–1970) was the first German practitioner of occupational medicine, working in this field from 1909 to 1952.

At the 49th annual scientific symposium of the association, held in Aachen last March, the Franz Koelsch Medal 2009 was awarded to Karl-Heinz Schaller for his outstanding contribution to the advancement of occupational medicine.

Since 1966, Karl-Heinz Schaller has played a leading part in the development of occupational biomonitoring at the Institute of Occupational, Social and Environmental Medicine of Erlangen University. During this time, he has contributed substantially to the establishment of this method in the field of applied occupational medicine.

Wide application of biomonitoring in Germany has greatly reduced the dangers of exposure to hazardous substances and has led to a sharp decline in the incidence of toxic occupational diseases. Karl-Heinz Schaller was one of the first scientists to work systematically on the prevention of occupational health hazards. With his consummate knowledge and experience, Schaller has for decades been an important advisor and good friend to numerous scientists

in Germany and across the world. He has also been called upon as a consultant to various German and international committees on biomonitoring, among them the German Research Foundation's Senate Commission on the Investigation of Health Hazards of Chemical Compounds in the work area and the Biological Exposure Indices Committee of the American Conference of Industrial Hygienists, to name but two.

With his wide-reaching professional expertise, extending well beyond the bounds of biomonitoring, Karl-Heinz Schaller has lent unwavering support to the journal *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, playing a key role in building up its reputation as one of the leading scientific journals in the field of occupational medicine.

On top of all this, Karl-Heinz Schaller is valued and appreciated by many of his fellow scientists for his expert advice on the fine things of life.

In recognition of and gratitude for his wide-ranging activities in national and international occupational medicine, the steering committee of the German Association for Occupational and Environmental Medicine unanimously decided to award the 2009 Franz Koelsch Medal to Karl-Heinz Schaller. I hereby extend him my heartfelt congratulations.

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