

## In Memoriam: Horst Grobecker (1934–2019)

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It is with great sadness that we report the passing, on January 31, 2019, of Horst Grobecker, Professor Emeritus for Pharmacology and Toxicology at Regensburg University, Germany.



Professor Grobecker was born in Erfurt and graduated as a Medical Doctor and PhD in 1958 from the Medical Faculty of Frankfurt am Main. He obtained a license to practice medicine in 1960. From 1961 to 1966, he was an academic scholar scientist at the Pharmacological Institutes of Düsseldorf and Frankfurt.

In 1966–1967, he received a Scholarship from the German Research Foundation to work at the Department of Histology of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, where he associated with Professors Kjell Fuxe and Thomas Hökfelt. From 1967, he was part of the Institute of Pharmacology at the University of Frankfurt, reaching the position of Professor and Department Head in 1972.

From 1974 to 1975 and again in 1976, Professor Grobecker joined Nobel Laureate Julius Axelrod at the Section on Pharmacology, National Institute of Mental Health, NIH, Bethesda, Maryland, USA. It was at the Section on Pharmacology where we met and joined efforts to elucidate the role of brain and adrenal catecholamines in hypertension and stress.

Upon his return to Germany in 1977, Professor Grobecker was appointed as Chair for Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Regensburg, where, for 20 years, he led a research team to continue his research on the role of catecholamines in human hypertension. In 1988, he was a Visiting Scientist with the ISPS Fellowship for Research at the Department of Pharmacology of Izumo Medical University, Japan, chaired by Professor Yamori. From 1980 to 1994, Professor Grobecker served, in addition, in the German Federal Airforce. He was a member of the Medical Department of the University of Regensburg from 1996 until his retirement in 2002.

Professor Grobecker published over 110 original research studies, some of these on the most prestigious international journals such as *Science*, *Nature*, *Circulation Research*, *American Journal of Physiology*, and the *European Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*. His research was multifaceted, included drug bioavailability and pharmacokinetics, basic and clinical pharmacology, and pre-clinical and clinical hypertension, and the role of beta-adrenergic blockers, calcium channel blockers, nicotine, and serotonin. His most notable achievements were his pioneer studies on the role of catecholamines in the sympathetic system associated with the early development of essential hypertension and stress.

While at NIH, Professor Grobecker had a leadership role on the clarification of the role of brain and adrenal catecholamines in the regulation of hypertension and stress, establishing for the first time their crucial participation in the early development and progression of essential hypertension (Grobecker et al. 1975; Saavedra et al. 1976), a matter of major translational value.

Professor Grobecker was a widely respected colleague, a friendly, generous, highly skilled, energetic, optimist,

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meticulous, and original neuroscientist, and a World-known clinical and experimental pharmacologist.

In addition to his original research activity, Professor Grobecker chaired Pharmacology and Toxicology Departments in two first-level universities in Germany, where he demonstrated his skills as administrator, with a major leadership role on their development and progress. During his tenure as Chairman, he mentored 25 PhD examinations, four of *them* “summa cum laude” and 21 “magna cum laude.” In addition, he organized 12 international conferences on cardiovascular acting pharmacological products and on antibiotics and presented over 100 lectures at national and international conferences on pharmacology, toxicology, cardiology, and chemotherapy.

Professor Grobecker was always very generous towards his family and friends. He leaves behind his cherished children Wolfgang and Berit, his precious grandchildren Felix and Tim, and Monika Grobecker, beloved mother of his

children. He was not only my colleague but also my personal friend, and he is sorely missed by the many associates, collaborators, students, and friends with whom he interacted over many years.

## References

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