

In Memoriam

André Kahn

With shock and deep sadness we received the news that Prof. André Kahn suddenly died on September 1, 2004. André has been one of the most eminent researchers in the field of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Starting with a study on the effects of apneas on transcutaneous PO₂ measurements in SIDS siblings and infants with apparent life-threatening events [1], his focus has always been on pathophysiological mechanisms for SIDS, with particular emphasis on obstructive sleep apnea and arousal mechanisms. He reported on the largest sample of polygraphic recordings in subsequent SIDS victims ever collected, giving us important insights into the subtle anomalies in respiratory control that can be found in these infants, particularly their increased propensity to upper airway obstruction. He also was the driving force behind the foundation of the European Society for the Study and Prevention of Infant Death (ESPID) in 1990, which helped enormously in getting SIDS studies started in Europe. He was elected as the first president of this society, serving in this role until 1994. He continued to do highly original research of the highest standards throughout his professional life, resulting in over 180 articles in peer-reviewed journals, including his latest piece of work, now published in this journal [2], and 50 contributions to textbooks. He had a genuine interest in SIDS parents, was a driving force in establishing SIDS Europe and encouraging dialogue between parents and researchers. As one ESPID member put it, he has been a spokesperson, investigator, counselor, organizer, and advocate in SIDS for so long, his contributions so many, his respect so widespread, his friendship so valued, that the coming days, weeks, and years will be filled with a void that will be difficult for all of us to even imagine.

Personally, I felt particularly close to him because we shared not only our interest in SIDS, but also the same sport. We had planned for so long to train together; now this will never happen. Each time I met him, particularly with Marie, his wife, he was full of warmth, charm and humor. All of us have lost a wonderful and admired colleague and friend. Our hearts go to his family. They were so happy together. I have no doubt, however, that he would want us to carry on, to bear the torch in his absence, and to remember and honor his life with a redoubling of our efforts to rid the world of the scourge of SIDS.

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References

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- [2] A. Kahn, J. Groswasser, P.J. Franco, S. Scaillet, B. Dan, I. Kago, T. Swaguchi and I. Kelmanson, Sudden infant death syndrome. Review of infant and environmental stress factors on survival, *J Pediatr Neurol* **3** (2005), 5–10.