

In Memory of Prof. Dr. med. Wolf Langewitz

27.10.1951 – 28.12.2024

With profound sorrow and heartfelt gratitude, EACH: International Association for Communication in Healthcare and the Clinic for Psychosomatics at the University Hospital Basel honor the memory of Prof. Dr. med. Wolf Langewitz. A visionary in medical communication, psychosomatic medicine, and patient-centered care, his passing marks an immense loss for the global healthcare communication community, especially in Basel, where he worked tirelessly since 1990.

Champion of Communication Education

Prof. Langewitz dedicated his life to advancing physician-patient communication, transforming it into an essential pillar of modern healthcare. His innovative contributions were instrumental in making communication a cornerstone of medical education, particularly in Switzerland. He designed and implemented comprehensive training programs at the University Hospital Basel that included communication courses, bedside teaching, and mentoring initiatives.

A hallmark of his approach was the "WRRS method" (Wait, Repeat, Reflect, Summarize), a simple yet profoundly impactful tool that has inspired generations of healthcare professionals to connect more deeply with patients. Prof. Langewitz believed in the power of "benevolent curiosity," emphasizing that every clinician could develop their communication skills to deliver more compassionate and effective care.

During his tenure as President of EACH (2006–2010), he played a pivotal role in fostering international collaboration and developing evidence-based educational frameworks that enhanced communication training across healthcare disciplines. His leadership and advocacy established new global benchmarks for patient-centered care and emphasized the critical importance of communication in improving healthcare outcomes.

Legacy in Research, Education, and Collaboration

As a prolific researcher and educator, Prof. Langewitz authored numerous influential publications on healthcare communication and psychosomatic medicine, earning widespread international recognition. His work combined rigorous science with practical insights, offering actionable tools for improving clinical interactions.

In 2002, he co-founded the Basel Institute for Psychosomatic Medicine (BIPM) alongside Alexander Kiss and Johannes Bitzer, creating a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration and training. This institute provided a space where clinicians could gain certification in psychosomatic and psychosocial medicine, which was later expanded into interdisciplinary specialties under the auspices of the Swiss Academy for Psychosomatic and Psychosocial Medicine (SAPPM).

Prof. Langewitz's advocacy and research culminated in the establishment of Switzerland's first Professorship for Medical Communication at the University of Basel, currently held by Prof. Dr. med. Sabina Hunziker. Through his commitment, communication education has become an enduring part of medical training, helping healthcare professionals worldwide better serve their patients.

An Inspirational Leader and Renaissance Man

Prof. Langewitz was more than an academic and clinician—he was a deeply empathetic human being. His warmth, humor, and love of life enriched the lives of those around him. Whether whistling cheerfully through the hospital hallways, engaging in deep philosophical

discussions, or sharing his passion for music, cooking, and storytelling, he left an indelible mark on everyone he met.

He also explored the philosophical dimensions of healthcare, integrating Hermann Schmitz's "New Phenomenology" into his work. By emphasizing embodied communication and atmospheric theory, he brought innovative perspectives to physician-patient interactions, helping clinicians navigate the subtle, often unspoken dynamics of care.

A Lasting Legacy

Prof. Langewitz's dedication to improving communication in healthcare has transformed medical education and patient care. His vision, wisdom, and compassion continue to inspire countless professionals worldwide, ensuring his legacy will endure in the hearts and minds of those who strive to make healthcare more humane.

Our deepest sympathies go to his family and all who were fortunate to know him. In his passing, we have lost not only a pioneering educator and scientist but also a remarkable human being.

In gratitude,

For the Clinic for Psychosomatics and the Department of Medical Communication at the University Hospital Basel:

- **Prof. Dr. med. Rainer Schäfert**
- **Prof. Dr. med. Sabina Hunziker**
- **Dr. Christoph Becker**
- **Prof. Dr. med. em. Alexander Kiss**

For EACH: International Association for Communication in Healthcare:

- **Prof. Richard Brown, President**
- **Prof. Lorraine Noble, Past President**
- **Prof. Gozie Offiah, President-elect**

Funeral Service, Friday 19 January 2025 at 2pm

St. Peter's Church, Peterskirchplatz 7, 4051 Basel

The funeral will take place in the closest family circle.

Mourning address: Langewitz family,
Amselstrasse 43, 4059 Basel

Instead of flowers, please give a donation to Villa YoYo Foundation, which offers childcare for children in disadvantaged areas in Swiss cities.
QR code gives more information.

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Rer: Wolf Langewitz