



PROF. KARL ULRICH PETRY
MD, PhD
1957-2020

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Tribute to Karl Ulrich Petry

On Tuesday, April 21, 2020, the papillomavirus research community lost one of our greats to cancer at the age of 62 – Prof. Dr. Karl Ulrich Petry. He studied Medicine from 1976 to 1983 at the Philipps-University in Marburg became assistant at the Dept. of Surgery in Remscheid and finally found his mission at the Dept. of ObGyn at the Diakonissen-Krankenhaus in Kassel. He was licensed as a physician in 1983 and moved 1986 to Tanzania at the Sokoine Regional Hospital in Lindi as Medical Officer. His focus there was surgery and gynaecology. He began research work in the field of HIV, schistosomiasis and other infectious diseases. Petry became spokesman for the development workers of the German Development Service (DED) in Tanzania. In 1989, he became an assistant doctor at the Gynaecological Clinic of the Hanover Medical School (MHH), where he was in charge of setting up the dysplasia consultation unit and the HPV research focus in gynaecological oncology from 1990 onwards. He worked on the role of HPV in the development of gynaecological neoplasias, developed new therapeutic procedures and conducted research on the role of immunodeficiency. In 1992 he completed his doctorate as Dr. med., became specialist in gynaecology and obstetrics in 1995 and, in the same year, became a senior physician at the gynaecological clinic of the MHH. His scientific focus concentrated on the use of HPV testing to improve the prevention of cervical cancer. In 2000 Petry received the *Venia legendi* for "Gynaecology and

Obstetrics" (Habilitation). Since 2003, Petry has been Chief Physician of the Gynaecological Oncology Clinic at the Wolfsburg Clinic, specialising in gynaecological oncology with a certified cancer centre and dysplasia unit as well as specialisations in ultra-radical surgical procedures and plastic-reconstructive surgery of the vagina and shame. In 2005, Petry was appointed APL Professor at the Hanover Medical School.

Despite his tremendous clinical responsibility, Prof. Petry successfully succeeded in continuing his scientific work. Under his direction in cooperation with various health insurance companies (Deutsche BKK und Audi BKK), the first German HPV screening pilot project was started in Wolfsburg in 1999 (Wolfsburg Primary HPV Screening project: WOLPHSCREEN). During this pilot he included together with more than 30 office based gynaecological practices 25,000 women in the age group over 30 years. This work has been visionary and has been the blueprint for the new screening directive in Germany beginning 2020 which will continuously improve screening for cervical cancer. His work will contribute to ensure that cervical cancer will be virtually eliminated in combination with the vaccine in a few decades. His scientific efforts has earned him numerous national and international awards and sponsorships.

We lost not only a great scientist but also a wonderful colleague.