

In Memoriam

In Memoriam: Professor Hermann Doose

Bernd A. Neubauer¹ Ulrike Schara²

On behalf of the Gesellschaft für Neuropädiatrie

¹ Department of Pediatric Neurology, University Children's Hospital (UKGM), Giessen, Germany² Department of Pediatric Neurology, Children's Hospital Essen, Germany

Neuropediatrics 2018;49:299–300.

Professor Hermann Doose died on April 23, 2018 after a short illness at the age of 90 years, leaving his family, friends, and former colleagues at a great loss. He was a founding member of the neuropediatric society in Germany and a major proponent of pediatric epileptology during the second half of the last century. He pioneered in genetic epilepsies of childhood and the genetics of EEG traits and made many lasting contributions to pediatric epileptology. His name stays inseparably connected with Myoclonic Astatic Epilepsy, which also bears the name “Doose syndrome.”

Hermann Doose was born in September, 1927 in Lübeck, North Germany, as the son of a surgeon and a gynecologist. In Lübeck he visited the local gymnasium, until he was drafted at the age of 16 to serve at an anti-aircraft gun during the last year of the war. One day he fell off the platform, broke his leg, and was transferred to a hospital. This finally made him the only survivor of the crew of students. He studied medicine in Kiel and Freiburg, followed by a postgraduate training in physiology, pathology, and finally pediatrics. In pediatrics he turned to neurology and epileptology after his residency. He started the first EEG laboratory in Kiel and finished his professorial thesis on the “Spectrum of Petit-Mal Epilepsies in Childhood” in 1963.

Professor Doose was head of the Department of Pediatric Neurology in Kiel, from 1975 until his retirement in 1992. His ambition for better treatment and comprehensive care for children with epilepsy made him establish the North German Epilepsy Center in 1972. He personally designed every detail of the building starting from the size of the rooms down to the position of every single power socket. In the following years, many hundreds of children with epilepsy benefited from his great clinical knowledge and his ambition to improve the fate of every single patient. Until the last weeks before his death he continuously received letters and phone calls from former patients who had stayed in personal contact with him for decades. Hermann Doose was a charis-

matic and dedicated teacher, who managed to attract many young doctors toward the field of child neurology and pediatric epileptology, thereby spreading his knowledge throughout the country. But he was also known as an almost relentlessly tough worker who sometimes pushed himself and his coworkers beyond their limits. At times, this self-inflicted work load and perfectionism took a toll on his health and family life.

Many of his publications stem from times before the days of PubMed, which makes a precise number difficult to obtain. However, it must lie beyond 250 by a margin. He also authored many books and book chapters. In the years between 1965 and 1998, his publications contributed decisively to the delineation of juvenile absence epilepsy (1965), myoclonic-astatic epilepsy, that is, Doose syndrome (1970), infantile absence epilepsy (1994), and infantile grand mal epilepsy (1998), now recognized as Dravet syndrome. At the age of 60, he decided to write a comprehensive textbook on pediatric epileptology in paperback format, so that every resident would be able to carry it in his white coat pocket and put it to use at bedside. When he was unable to find a publisher who agreed on the low book price he proposed, he published it privately. Today, this book, now named “Dooses Epilepsies in Childhood and Adolescence,” is available in its 13th edition.

Hermann Doose was president of the German chapter of the ILAE and the Society of Neuropediatrics. He received several prizes, among them most notably the Michael price in 1963, the Berger price in 1985, and the Otfried Foerster medal in 2004. In 1975, he was named “Ambassador for Epilepsy” by the ILAE. In 1974 he also founded a fundraising society for research on childhood epilepsies that is still active today (“Hilfe für das anfallsranke Kind”).

Hermann Doose is survived by his wife, two children, and their families. He will be remembered as a great scientist and an empathic clinician by colleagues, friends, and patients.

Address for correspondence

Bernd A. Neubauer, MD,
Department of Pediatric
Neurology, Univ.-Klinikum
Giessen/Marburg; Feulgenstr.
12, 35389 Giessen, Germany
(e-mail: bernd.a.neubauer@
paediat.med.uni-giessen.de).

© 2018 Georg Thieme Verlag KG
Stuttgart · New York

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0038-1665549>.
ISSN 0174-304X.