



OBITUARIES

John Betteridge

John Reckless, Francis Matthey



John Betteridge was an international expert on cholesterol, hyperlipidaemia, and cardiovascular disease prevention. He was an excellent and caring physician, highly respected by both his patients and his colleagues. Not only an outstanding clinician, he had a flair for biochemistry, which gained him an international reputation in cholesterol metabolism.

Early career

Born in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, John Betteridge was educated at the Boys' Grammar School. From a musical family, John played the cornet in the Donisthorpe scout band before taking up the trumpet, in which he excelled, playing extensively with the Leicestershire County Youth Orchestra and winning music competitions. Faced with the decision of whether to become a professional musician or a doctor, he chose medicine, but nonetheless continued to play his trumpet in several orchestras.

When studying medicine at King's College and Guy's Hospital, John gained a first class honours in biochemistry. After qualifying and undertaking his initial medical training, he joined Professor David Galton's research unit at St Bartholomew's Hospital to work on aspects of cholesterol metabolism. He performed the first *ex vivo* study in human tissue of an HMG Co-A reductase inhibitor (a "statin") and obtained his MD in 1979. Despite undertaking a very busy senior registrar post at the Royal United Hospital Bath, John studied platelet function in diabetes and was awarded his PhD in 1985. When he returned for the PhD ceremony at Bath University he arrived with two left shoes and had to borrow a pair from his consultant that were two sizes too large. It was in Bath that he met his future wife, Chris Martin, then a house physician.

National and international career

John Betteridge was appointed in London as consultant physician at the Middlesex Hospital, and then at University College Hospital as professor of endocrinology and metabolism. He undertook extensive educational roles in substantial national programmes over more than 20 years, updating knowledge of lipids, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease prevention in primary and secondary care. He was a member

of the taskforce on diabetes and vascular disease of both the European Society of Cardiology and the European Association for the Study of Diabetes.

John directed a number of major diabetes cardiovascular outcome studies. He was UK principal investigator and member of the international steering committee for the PROactive pioglitazone study, principal investigator in the CARDS atorvastatin study, and was on the steering committee for the Medical Research Council's UK Prospective Diabetes Study of glucose and blood pressure control. He was a member of the grants committee of the British Heart Foundation, president of the council on lipids in clinical medicine at the Royal Society of Medicine, and senior adviser to the board of the International Atherosclerosis Society. He was active with the British Hyperlipidaemia Association and with a patient charity, the Family Heart Association. After the merger of these two organisations, John was chair of the national cholesterol charity HEART UK. With the charity he worked hard for better recognition of those at high cardiovascular risk, including the 0.4% of the population with familial hypercholesterolaemia.

John was a gifted lecturer, always with encyclopaedic command of his subject. He was frequently asked to speak at plenary sessions of international meetings, and was elected fellow of the American Heart Association. He published over 300 peer reviewed papers and supervised 15 graduate students through their PhD or MD work. John became dean of the Royal Society of Medicine in 2010 and was subsequently dean emeritus. He received the RSM medal for his work.

He was pleased to be a governor at the City of London School for Girls and at the City Academy Islington. Recreation included cricket, shooting, and fishing; his skill and enthusiasm as a fly fisherman took him far afield, to rivers in Alaska and South America. Music remained important throughout his life, as did gardening and growing his own vegetables, of which he was particularly proud.

John Betteridge leaves his wife, Chris, a general practitioner; their son, Tom; and their daughter, Sally, whom he was delighted to walk down the aisle at her wedding last year. John was widely loved, respected, and the impact of his research work has improved the lives of countless numbers of patients worldwide. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Biography

Professor of endocrinology and metabolism (b 1948; q King's College Hospital, London, 1972; MD, PhD, FRCP Lond), died from a sacral chordoma on 4 October 2019

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