

# Memorial pages

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Prof Michael Földi (10/01/1920 – 20/10/2018)

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Figure 1 - Prof. Michael Földi.

Michael Földi has left us.

He did with great dignity, as he had done for a long life dedicated to the relief of the suffering of patients, and to the education of a huge number of health workers who today, in the world, spread his experience and are sad for his death.

I prefer to remember him, on behalf of the many lymphologists who adhere to the International Society of Lymphology (ISL), for his extraordinary interest in research and continuous updating.

Together with his wife Ethel he spent his life dedicating it to the study and treatment of patients with lymphedema, creating in Germany, at Interzarten near Freiburg in the wonderful Black Forest, one of the most famous lymphological Centers in the world, where together with his specialized staff he welcomed patients coming from every continent for their necessary treatments.

Among the founding members of the ISL, in Zurich in July 1966 (also in this forerunner and far-sighted) he joined the new European Lymphology Group just as early in March 1982 (which later became the European Society

of Lymphology). In both contexts he constantly brought his contribution of scientific and human wealth with the active and participatory presence in congress discussions, always conducted with refinement, pragmatism and high scientific level.

It is not possible to foresee how many doctors and physiotherapists were trained over time at his School of Formation founded in Interzarten, coming from all over Europe and even from overseas. He chaired also several practical and theoretical courses abroad. I had also the honour to participate to one of them, organized by Prof. Corradino Campisi in Genoa, having the good fortune to listen to him as a teacher, appearance under which he excelled.

His studies were published in all the major international journals of the sector and many of them were particularly innovative and enlightening. Among them I would like to mention his experience on guinea-pigs, that demonstrated the lymphokinetic effect of alpha-benzopyrones highlighting the marked increase in the frequency and contractile intensity of the thoracic duct following administration of a synthetic coumarin derivative.

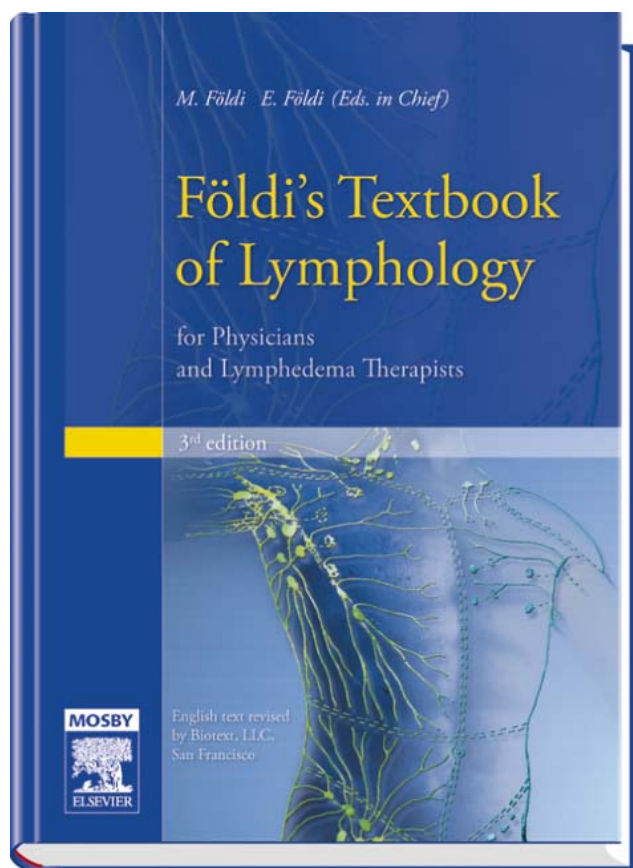


Figure 2 - Földi's Textbook of Lymphology.

Michael Földi produced a long series of scientific papers, covering a wide range of topics related to Lymphology. His very rich scientific production culminated in the 2007 edition of the Földi's Textbook of Lymphology, a real treatise on lymphology, with particular attention to all the chapters with the ability to update all the main topics treated, insomuch as it shortly became the main reference text (and still is today) for many doctors, physiotherapists, nurses and experts of the subject.

The book is written in English, with the strong contribution of Ethel, the woman of his life, and together they wanted to transmit all their experience to future generations with a strong scientific imprint message. The whole world International lymphology Community should consider their diagnostic and therapeutic indications as a treasure for the health of patients.

In the text it is contained the essence of the inspiring principles of the activity of the Földi Clinic in the Black

Forest, where thousands of patients from all over the world found a sure point of reference to alleviate their suffering.

I remember him, in particular, in Rome, in the San Giovanni Battista Hospital where I work, on the podium of the Great Hall (during the Congress of the European Society of Lymphology in 2005), in one of the last conferences in which I had the pleasure to meet him (the last one was perhaps the following year at his home, in Hinterzarten), when I had the honor of moderating together with him a scientific session on the medical therapy of lymphoedema. He recalled me his first experiences with benzopyrones and their effect on the contractility of the thoracic duct. He agreed with the arguments I had just presented on the combined use of several benzopyrones, which if associated have a much greater clinical effect than if taken alone. At the end of the session, giving me some written sheets, he told me 'keep Sandro, this is a job for your Journal!' (the European Journal of Lymphology).

He was an "essential" man and, at the same time, highly authoritative.

I do not want to remind you his prestigious positions in all the main national and international scientific societies of the discipline, nor the important scientific and didactic production that he continuously provided for decades. I'd like instead to remind him to you as one of the Fathers of world Lymphology, a great Clinician, a great Man!

In the last years of his life, Ethel told me what wonderful life-partner he had been. He no longer had the strength to participate in the Congresses, due to the physical limitations that his old age imposed on him. Nevertheless, he continued transmitting to those who were close to him all his experience, polished as always, until the end of his days.

We will not miss him as a simple colleague, a simple scholar, a clinician or a teacher. He has left us as the Master of Lymphology.

Thank you Michael: our knowledge today owes so much to You!

**Sandro Michelini**

President of the International Society of Lymphology

## References

- 1) Földi M, Földi E. Földi's Textbook of Lymphology for Physicians and Lymphedema Therapists. III ed. Elsevier. San Francisco; 2009.