

# **The History of the Swiss Pediatric Pathology Group (SPPG)**

## **Our forerunners**

A number of Swiss Pathologists had been interested in Pediatric Pathology already in the 50ies and 60ies of the last century. In Zürich Profs. Uehlinger and Siebenmann already described a number of important lesions. A maior interest in Pediatric Pathology was also shown by Prof. Blanc in Geneva, Prof. Molz in Zürich and Dr. Mühlethaler in Aarau.

## **The first steps**

The idea of creating a group of Swiss Pediatric Pathologists was born in the beginning of the year 1980. There were two essential events:

The first was a letter written in April 1980 by Prof. Wagner from Bern, who was then president of the Swiss Pediatric Oncology Group (SPOG). The Pediatric Clinical Oncologists had realized that there was need for the collaboration with the Pediatric Pathologists in order to be able to join the American Study Groups and properly conduct their studies. Therefore they invited a representative of the Pediatric Pathologists to join them. The initial contacts were established between Bozic, Briner, Cox and Zimmermann. Briner was asked to get in contact with the SPOG and take part at the meetings of the Executive Committee of the SPOG. We decided to form a panel meeting at regular intervals, reviewing the most interesting and difficult cases.

The second line of support came from Prof. John Emery from Sheffield, who had just started in 1979 a Series of "Advanced Courses in Pediatric Pathology", which were run under the auspices of the International Pediatric Pathology Association. At the end of the second Course he proposed that the following be held in Switzerland.

## **Organizing the third Advanced Course of Pediatric Pathology, in Grindelwald, September 1981**

Organizing a one week course for 40 Pathologists interested in Pediatric Pathology from all over the world was a major task and was successfully met. This was possible only due to the fact that all the Swiss colleagues, who had formed the nucleus, were willing to closely cooperate in the organization.

## **Creating a Constitution**

The first informal meeting took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1981 in Berne and was attended by Bozic, Briner, Cox, Mühlethaler, Ohnacker and Zimmermann. We realized, that it would be important to form an official body and hence decided to create a constitution. According to it, all Pathologists, residing in Switzerland and in the direct vicinity with a maior interest in Pediatric Pathology were invited to join the group. The main objectives were: to foster Pediatric Pathology scientifically and practically, to develop and maintain relations with related scientific branches, medical and biological disciplines, to develop contacts to national and international associations of Pathology and Pediatric Oncology and encourage friendly relationships among its members. It was decided, that the official working language at the meetings be English.

### **Founding the Swiss Pediatric Pathology Group (SPPG)**

At the meeting on 4th June 1983 in Zürich the SPPG was officially founded. Briner was elected President, Bozic became Vice-president, Zimmermann was Secretary and Cox was Treasurer. At the annual Meeting of the Swiss Pathology Society in November 1983 in Locarno the Group was officially announced and the colleagues interested were invited to join.

### **Regular Meetings of the SPPG**

We are meeting on a regular basis three to four times a year and are credited as part of the continuing education. A main part is the discussion of difficult and interesting cases by reviewing slides that have been circulated beforehand. In addition there are reports and lectures by the members or invited guests on important topics.

### **Fostering scientific projects, travel grants**

A number of scientific projects have been supported as well as several travel grants mainly for colleagues from Eastern European countries and Africa have been given the opportunity of attending meetings of the PPS.

### **Contacts to the Swiss Pediatric Oncology Group and Neonatologists**

One of our member is representing our group at the regular meetings of the Executive Committee of the SPOG thus ensuring regular collaboration with the Pediatric Oncologists, Radiologists and Pediatric Surgeons. The SPPG reviewed the Hodgkin study of the SPOG and took part in an infant mortality study of the Neonatologists.

### **Organizing “Arbeitsgespräche Deutscher Kinderpathologen“**

In 1990 the SPPG invited the German speaking Pediatric Pathologists to hold their “Arbeitsgespräch Deutscher Kinderpathologen” for the first time in Switzerland. The meeting in Zürich was a great success, especially since it was the first time after the fall of the “Berliner Mauer” that the colleagues from the former DDR were able to participate. In November 1999 Elisabeth Bruder organized in Basel an excellent Arbeitsgespräch for the second time in Switzerland.

### **Slide Seminars in Pediatric Pathology for the Swiss Pathology Society**

In 1987 and in 1995 the slide seminar at the annual spring meeting of the Swiss Pathology Society was given by our group. The next one is scheduled for May 2002.

### **Organizing a PPS meeting in Switzerland**

A major event was the organization of the Annual Meeting of the Paediatric Pathology Society in February 1988. For the first time in the history of the PPS the annual meeting (which takes usually place in September) was organized in late wintertime and was held in Villars VD, which gave participants the opportunity to some skiing.

### **Organizing Courses in Pediatric Pathology**

In order to give the opportunity of informing our colleagues about important recent developments in our speciality, a long Course on various topics was organized in

Luzern in 1989 and in 1993 a Course in Molecular Biological Technics was given in Zürich.