

Building an International Community of Paediatric Anaesthesiologists: An interview with Dr Edward Sumner

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Abstract

Dr Edward Sumner (1940) enjoyed a remarkably productive career as consultant pediatric anesthetist at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. His leadership in clinical care helped his department rise to eminence. He trained hundreds of registrars in pediatric anesthesia and educated thousands more through invited lectures and by co-editing leading textbooks of neonatal and pediatric anesthesia. During his long tenure as Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Anesthesia*, he led the growth of the young journal to prominence. Based on an interview and a long-standing professional and personal friendship of forty-four years, this article reviews Ted Sumner's outstanding contributions to the specialty of pediatric anesthesia and to the development of a strong international community of pediatric anesthesiologists.

KEYWORDS

anesthesia history, Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, Edward Sumner, Great Ormond Street Hospital, pediatric anesthesia, *Pediatric Anesthesia* journal

1 | INTRODUCTION

The maturation of Paediatric Anaesthesiology as a specialty accelerated during the last three decades of the twentieth century as a result of the leadership of many outstanding individuals. Edward "Ted" Sumner, MA BM BCh FRCA, (born 1940) (Figure 1) contributed to the development of the specialty during his notable career at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London, UK. During his 28 years as a Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist at GOSH, he was at the forefront of clinical advancements, particularly in cardiac anesthesia, respiratory care, and postoperative pain management. Through his clinical teaching, he educated hundreds of residents in the fine art of anesthetizing infants and children. Through his writing and lecturing, he educated thousands more worldwide. In his roles as Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Anesthesia*, President of the Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland (APAGBI), and founding member of the Federation of European Associations of Paediatric Anaesthesia (FEAPA), he provided key leadership in the

effort to build bridges among international pediatric anesthesiologists in pursuit of common educational and policy goals.

1.1 | Background

Born in 1940, Sumner was the fourth child in a family that valued education and the arts. His father was a Mathematics professor at the University of Nottingham as well as a musician and notable expert on the pipe organ. His childhood was happy. He was doted on by his older siblings. His early education was at a private school in Nottingham, where, as he describes, he had a decided turn toward academics in his teen years and did very well in school. He studied Medicine at Oxford University and achieved a First Class Honours degree before pursuing his clinical years at University College Hospital (UCH) in London. He was attracted to anesthesia because he had an enjoyable clinical experience accompanied by excellent teaching from the anesthesiologists at UCH. He stayed at UCH as a Registrar in Anaesthetics from 1968 to 1971 and was Senior Registrar at St. Thomas' Hospital in London until 1973. Sumner's record of academic achievement grew when he was awarded the Nuffield Prize for

To view the accompanying video online, please visit: <https://youtu.be/SDbO3xj4B-s>

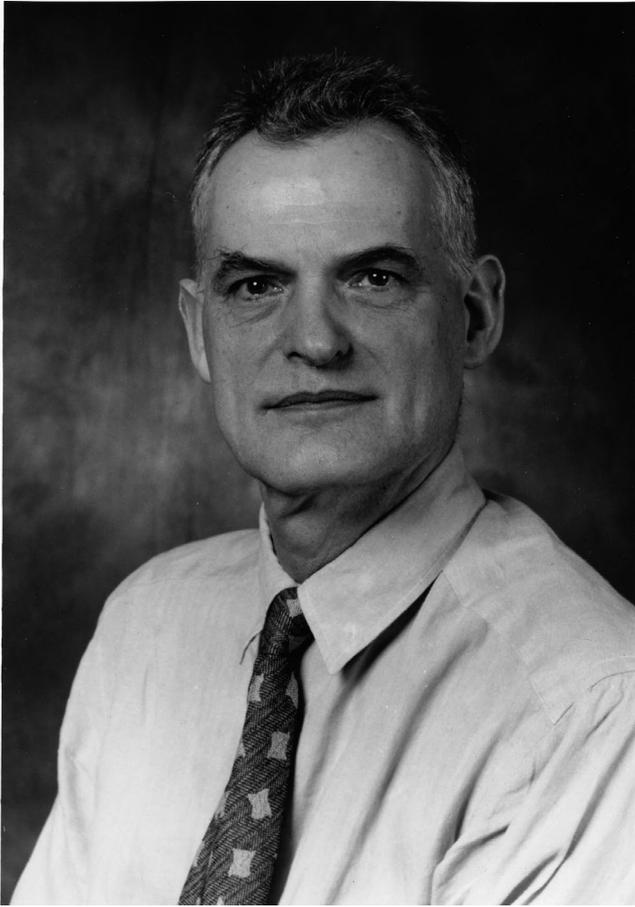


FIGURE 1 Edward Sumner MA BM BCh FRCA

achieving the highest level of distinction at his primary examination for the Faculty of Anaesthetists of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1969 (Figure 2). Two rotations during his training stand out as seminal events in the forming of his career. One was a seven-month rotation at the National Heart Hospital, which he described as an intense immersion into cardiac anesthesia and intensive care ("Nothing phased me after that, however sick the patient!"). The other was a 1-year rotation at GOSH, where he discovered his love of pediatric anesthesia. A favorite mentor was Dr Sheila Anderson, who had been a protégé of Ivan Magill, thus allowing Ted to claim direct lineage from the great Dr Magill! Sumner was invited to apply for the position of consultant anesthetist at GOSH and was subsequently accepted in 1973.

1.2 | Clinical innovator

Sumner was appointed Consultant in Paediatric Anaesthesia at GOSH in 1973 (Figure 3). He soon became a leader in the modernization of anesthetic and intensive care at GOSH. Applying his past experience in cardiac anesthesia, he contributed to the development of the cardiac anesthesia team to the high quality that is maintained at GOSH today. For example, his technical skill was immediately recognized by the cardiac surgery team. Percutaneous placement of radial arterial and internal jugular catheters in infants had been rarely performed, but Sumner placed them routinely. Prior to the manufacture of multi-lumen central

venous catheters, he would place two or three separate single internal jugular catheters to achieve the desired access. When he arrived at GOSH, most cardiac babies requiring postoperative mechanical ventilation received a tracheostomy. Sumner changed that practice to long-term nasotracheal intubation with polyvinylchloride tubes, which was becoming the standard of care at that time.

Intensive care and respiratory support services at GOSH required a great deal of reorganization at that time. Although the cardiac surgical patients were closely monitored and observed in a special unit, no designated intensive care unit existed for other surgical patients, who received advanced care on their own wards. Ventilated patients were spread out over the entire hospital, and huge, primitive ventilators were wheeled (by the anesthetic registrar) to various wards around the hospital when needed. Sumner recognized the challenges associated with this scheme; over time, new ventilators were developed and obtained, and intensive care was centralized. The respiratory support service for the entire hospital was developed under Sumner's supervision and leadership.

Sumner was continuously a clinical leader at GOSH. He pays tribute to his elder colleagues, Bill Glover, Ted Battersby, and David

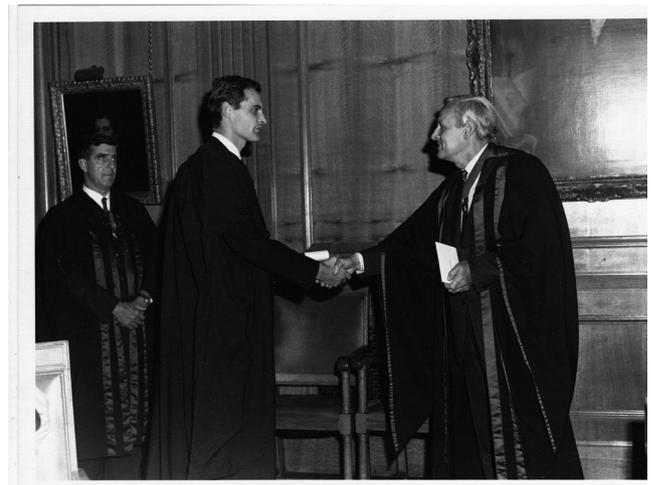


FIGURE 2 Sumner accepting the Nuffield Prize in 1969

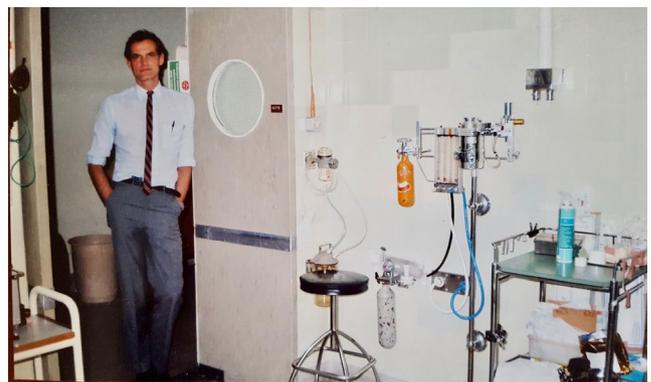


FIGURE 3 Sumner in an induction room at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in 1985 [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Hatch, for their encouragement and the clinical freedom in which he could thrive. Sumner served both as Director of the Department of Anaesthetics and Director of the Intensive Care Unit during his 28-year clinical career. He is particularly proud of starting the first acute pain service in the hospital in the late-1980s. In his words: "I read an article in *Anesthesiology* about somebody starting an adult postoperative pain clinic run by the anesthesiologists, and I thought that's what we should have." Working with receptive hospital leadership and medical and nursing colleagues, funding was created for two part-time pain consultants, a senior nurse, and a secretary. This service has evolved into a modern acute pain service and chronic pain clinic.

An essential component of an acute pain service is, of course, expertise with regional anesthetic techniques. Aside from the occasional lumbar epidural block in an older child or caudal block in an infant, such techniques were not performed at GOSH. When a visiting anesthesiologist from Italy commented on this lack, Sumner decided to visit Dr Paolo Busoni in Florence to learn about regional analgesia. Busoni taught him several advanced blocks in babies and children which, given Sumner's technical skills, were quickly learned. Returning to London, Sumner began using regional blocks and postoperative epidural infusions in his patients. Favorable outcomes overcame the initial reluctance by surgeons, and regional techniques eventually became widely used at GOSH for both intraoperative anesthesia and postoperative analgesia.

Sumner's clinical acumen was appreciated beyond the walls of GOSH. He anesthetized both Princes William and Harry during their childhoods and interacted extensively with their mother at those times. He represented GOSH at Princess Diana's funeral in 1997.

1.3 | Outstanding educator

GOSH is a major teaching hospital in the United Kingdom, and trainees come from all over the country and world to learn and gain clinical experience. Over the years, countless anesthetic registrars from all over the world, including this author, were taught in the Department. For these registrars, the experience in pediatric anesthesia for both cardiac and other types of surgery was superb.

Sumner taught a wider audience of anesthetists as well. He was a frequent invited speaker at many courses throughout Great Britain, including those at the Institute of Child Health, the British Council, the Royal Society of Medicine, the Royal College of Surgeons, and for 14 years the Royal College of Anaesthetists Final Fellowship Course. He was an active member of the APAGBI, where he presented papers at meetings, served as a committee member, and served as president. Internationally, he was an invited lecturer or visiting professor at over 50 conferences in Europe and another dozen on all other continents except South America and Antarctica! (Figure 4) A memorable lecture occurred in 1999 when he was invited to give the Jackson Rees lecture at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. He was in awe of Rees, considered by many to be the father of pediatric anesthesia, and was delighted to find Rees to be a friendly and modest person. In 2002, Sumner gave the inaugural Professor V. G. Appukutty Memorial Oration in Chennai, India, to honor the pioneering Indian pediatric anesthesiologist.



FIGURE 4 Sumner (right) with the author when visiting Colorado to speak at a conference, about 1990 [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Sumner's expanding network of international contacts allowed him to become more involved in international teaching and policy development. During his term as president of the APAGBI, he was actively involved in the formation of FEAPA (now the European Society for Paediatric Anaesthesiology). He subsequently became President-Elect of FEAPA, although was unable to serve as president because of ill health at the time. While contributing significantly to the improvement of international cooperation among pediatric anesthesiologists, he also benefitted personally by gaining an enormous number of friends around the world that is maintained today.

Sumner found the printed word to be an outstanding medium for disseminating knowledge. He was a prolific writer who contributed articles to journals and chapters to numerous textbooks, the first when he was a senior registrar. In the early 1980s, Sumner joined his colleague at GOSH, David Hatch ("a truly excellent person; we got on well") as co-editor of the book, *Neonatal Anaesthesia*. This was the beginning of a fruitful editorial collaboration that resulted in the creation of a series of highly regarded textbooks in pediatric and neonatal anesthesia that were among the best of their times.¹⁻⁶ Hatch & Sumner's *Textbook of Paediatric Anaesthesia* is currently in its third edition under new editors.⁷

1.4 | The journal

Sumner was a founding editorial board member of the journal, *Paediatric Anaesthesia*, which launched its first issue in 1991. The journal had been under development for four years under the direction of Dr Gordon Bush of Liverpool and Mr Stuart Taylor of Blackwell Publishing, beginning with a meeting in Paris hosted by Dr Claude Saint-Maurice in 1987. A goal was to create an international journal, so Bush gathered an editorial board of expert pediatric

TABLE 1 Personal history and timeline of Dr Edward Sumner's career and contributions to pediatric anesthesia

Birthdate: 17 August 1940, Nottingham, England
Education:
1960-1966: Oxford University, MA, BM, BCh 1966
1960-1964: Magdalen College, Oxford
1964-1966: University College Hospital Medical School, London
1967-1971: University College Hospital, London: House Officer and Registrar, Anaesthetics (including 12 mo at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children)
1971-1973: St. Thomas' Hospital, London: Senior Registrar, Anaesthetics (Including 7 mo National Heart Hospital and 6 mo National Hospital for Nervous Diseases)
Clinical practice:
1973-2001: Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London
1987-1992: Director, Department of Anaesthetics, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children
1988-1993: Director, Cardiac Intensive Care Unit, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children
2001-2003: President, Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland
Honors:
1963: First Class Honours Degree, Oxford University
1969: Nuffield Prize, Faculty of Anaesthetists, Royal College of Surgeons
1997: Represented GOSH at Princess Diana's funeral
1999: Jackson Rees lecturer, Erasmus University, Rotterdam
2002: Professor VG Appukutty Memorial Orator, Chennai, India
Editorial contributions:
1979-1999: Co-editor of leading textbooks (references ¹⁻⁷)
1991: Founding editorial board member, <i>Paediatric Anaesthesia</i>
1994-2007: Editor-in-Chief, <i>Pediatric Anesthesia</i>

anesthesiologists from around the world, including Sumner (London), Saint-Maurice (Paris), Nick Goudzousian (Boston), Fritz Berry (Charlottesville), GW Black (Belfast), and Sten Lindahl (Stockholm). After leading the infant journal for three years, Bush stepped down as Editor-in-Chief in 1994 and turned the reins over to his chosen successor, Edward Sumner. Sumner described the state of the specialty and restated the aims of the journal in his opening editorial.⁸

As is the case with any beginning journal, there were plenty of challenges. After *Paediatric Anaesthesia* was launched, some of the other established anesthesia journals added pediatric anesthesia sections in a competitive attempt to attract authors. Raising the impact factor of the journal was desirable in order to attract quality papers, but this takes time for a new journal to accomplish. Furthermore, improving the impact factor and encouraging international growth of the journal were in some ways conflicting, and finding the right balance between the two was challenging. Sumner believed that it was the obligation of the journal to be truly international and to provide a service to other countries, so he actively encouraged and sought manuscript submissions from around the world. Sometimes, this required

extensive editing of manuscripts to make them readable in English, but the journal's mission to provide an international service was met.

Sumner led the journal for 14 years, longer than any other Editor-in-Chief. He added section editors and enlarged both the editorial board and the editorial advisory board in order to further expand international involvement in the journal. Leading the journal was the thing that Sumner enjoyed the most during his productive career. "I had this wonderful network of colleagues all over the world, and I felt that I was doing a good job." Indeed, he was doing an excellent job! under his leadership, *Pediatric Anesthesia* took its place as an established international specialty journal. It grew from bimonthly to monthly publication, its readership increased throughout the world, and while its impact factor inched slowly upward, both the number of submitted manuscripts and their source countries grew dramatically. Sumner's leadership of the journal was gratefully acknowledged by his successor, Neil Morton, who described the strong state of the journal when he took over as Editor-in-Chief in 2008.⁹

2 | CONCLUSION

Ted Sumner can be proud of his career! (Table 1) He introduced clinical changes at GOSH that resulted in significant improvements and modernization of anesthetic care that helped his department achieve the eminent reputation that it continues to enjoy today. He was a tireless and effective educator who delivered an impressive number of invited lectures, contributed chapters to numerous textbooks, and edited a series of highly regarded textbooks of neonatal and pediatric anesthesia. During his long tenure as Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Anesthesia*, he led the growth of the young journal to prominence as a premier sub-specialty publication. In each of these endeavors, Edward Sumner made outstanding contributions to the specialty of pediatric anesthesia and to the development of a strong international community of pediatric anesthesiologists. In looking back on his career with satisfaction, he stated, "It was fun!"

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

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