

## **Obituary of Dr Leslie Roderick (“Roddie”) McNicol (1945-2016)**

It is with great sadness that I write this tribute to my friend and office-buddy of some 25 years Roddie McNicol who has died suddenly on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 in France at the age of 71 years.

Roddie was educated at Allan Glens School and the University of Glasgow. He trained in anaesthesia in Glasgow and was appointed as a Consultant with clinical sessions mainly in orthopaedics, plastic surgery and paediatrics. He was co-author of one of the first papers on ketamine pharmacokinetics in children in 1983 and with Douglas Arthur wrote a very influential review of local anaesthetic techniques in children for the British Journal of Anaesthesia in 1986. This, along with his many lectures, tutorials and one-to-one clinical teaching sessions, encouraged widespread adoption of regional anaesthesia in paediatric practice. Around this time, day case surgery was developing and Roddie’s techniques of “balanced analgesia” were found to be perfect for many paediatric day cases. He always taught that if a child wakes up pain free after surgery they will need less analgesia thereafter and this principle of pre-emptive analgesia has proven to be extremely important in paediatric patients, most especially in those coming back for multiple procedures.

He was always keen to encourage clinical research and to apply new techniques and technologies to his paediatric practice. He published his experience with anterior approach to sciatic nerve blockade in children and evaluated fascia iliaca blocks and rectus sheath blocks in children. Roddie was very supportive of the concept of the pain management team and encouraged research into PCA in children, the use of the subcutaneous route via an indwelling cannula to inject or infuse morphine, and the use of wound and dressing catheters for local anaesthetic infusions into sites such as for iliac crest bone grafts or split skin grafts. He always had good ideas to try in children such as different LMA insertion techniques, use of the fibrescope to evaluate LMA positioning and problems, and was among the first to study postoperative hypoxaemia in children with pulse oximetry.

He was elected to the Councils of both the AAGBI and the APAGBI. For the AAGBI, he served diligently on many working groups and often influenced the AAGBI to more fully consider paediatric aspects of their work. Indeed he prompted an important debate about the pros and cons of centralisation of paediatric services in an effective editorial in *Anaesthesia* in 1997 following on from the NCEPOD report of 1990 which led on to the more rational current approach espoused by the AAGBI, APAGBI and RCoA and summarised in the GPAS and ACSA documentation and processes. Roddie served for many years as a College examiner and always said it was the best CME he ever had!

Roddie was a very funny man and a great character with a fund of hilarious stories and extremely rude jokes and was always the life and soul of any social event. Here he is seen in typical pose sharing an anecdote with Jack Rees.



He made many amusing contributions to the AAGBI Newsletters and formed a completely fictitious society (which some thought to be a real one) called the Tricky Vein Society which will be long remembered! Roddie was a passionate Scot and this occasionally backfired, such as when he was ejected from an English pub for teaching the landlord's pet Mynah bird the words of the Scottish National Anthem. He was passionately interested in sport and latterly particularly in cricket and incredibly was a keen supporter of the English Test Match Team. He was always well-travelled and in his retirement spent several years adventuring around the world with his wife Anne Marie and especially spending quality time with their three children and seven grandchildren, most often in France and Australia.

A thanksgiving service was held in the University of Glasgow Chapel on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016 where around 200 family members, friends and colleagues celebrated his life in music, poetry and song and with moving tributes from his children and closest friends. I think Roddie would have agreed with the words read in his honour from the poem *Thankful am I* by Leslie Scrase:..... "When I look back upon my richly varied years, I crave no more, thankful that I have lived..... so shed no tears."

Dr Neil S. Morton  
Bridge of Allan, Stirling  
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