

Remembering Ernst Wynder

Alert readers may have noticed that unlike more formal photographs of Ernst Wynder that have appeared elsewhere, the one that accompanied Sir Richard Doll's tribute to Wynder in the *Journal* shows Ernst in shirtsleeves, quite at his ease.¹ The photo in question was taken one Sunday afternoon in 1979 at his Westchester County "country house."



Jerome Cornfield, Ernst Wynder, and Steven Stellman: Westchester County, NY, 1979.

Ernst Wynder worked at cancer prevention 7 days a week, and he frequently invited guests, as well as American Health Foundation staff, to spend weekends away from the turmoil of Manhattan and discussing research and planning new projects. The guest on that particular weekend was Jerome Cornfield, whose advice Ernst had sought concerning our manuscript on saccharin and bladder cancer.² Cornfield (whose image appears in the uncropped photo) was then in "retirement" with the George Washington University Biostatistics Center, which he founded after a long and productive career in academia and government (among other achievements as a designer of the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial [MRFIT]).

Cornfield was one of a remarkable cadre of statisticians and epidemiologists with whom Ernst was associated beginning in the 1950s and whose collective work helped to define the emerging discipline of cancer epidemiology. This group also included William Haenszel, Nathan Mantel, and Michael Shimkin of the National Cancer Institute; Cuyler Hammond and Lawrence Garfinkel of the American Cancer Society; and Abraham Lilienfeld of Johns Hopkins.

In his tribute, Sir Richard alludes to a 1959 paper of which Cornfield was the first

author and to which many of the group mentioned above contributed.³ That paper played an influential role in the first report on smoking and health by the surgeon general,⁴ and it deserves to be read by today's students of epidemiology and public health. It contains a lucid and well-organized discussion of a vast number of questions and objections that had been raised by those who doubted the link between smoking and lung cancer.

As Sir Richard notes, with his strong personality Ernst was sometimes perceived to "discourage cooperation with other lead-

ing epidemiologists." Nevertheless, his collaborative papers with the above-mentioned individuals number in the dozens, and his bibliography of over 800 publications, which includes hundreds of coauthors throughout the world, constitutes an extraordinary scientific and personal legacy. □

Steven D. Stellman, PhD, MPH

Requests for reprints should be sent to Steven D. Stellman, PhD, MPH, American Health Foundation, 300 E 42nd St, New York, NY 10017 (e-mail: stellman@compuserve.com).

References

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