

Professor Heinz Stammberger (1946-2018)



The Father of Endoscopic Sinus Surgery

Within the global ENT community, there can be few people whose names are as well-known as his, and his loss will be keenly felt around the world.

Muaaz Tarabichi pays tribute.

“I am telling you Heinz, the name Stammberger means a lot more to people than sinus surgery.”

“Muaaz, I think you are imagining stuff.”

I cannot recall how many times I had the above exchange with Heinz, I think his retort reflects how he truly saw himself. But everybody else saw him differently. As we grieve his loss and as I exchange messages and conversations with colleagues around the world, I am more convinced than ever that Heinz’s legacy means a lot more to the global ENT community than his innovations in endoscopic sinus surgery.

Firstly and most of all, beyond his German and Austrian roots, he was a true globalist, he loved all sorts of terrains, people, cultures and religions. He was fascinated by all and felt that our problems, solutions and the way forward are rooted in that global view. He was as committed to teaching surgeons in the far corners of the world as he was to his Austrian and European compatriots.

Secondly, Heinz wanted to do the right thing for only that reason. He also expected others to do the same and could not understand why anybody would not. Although he was very accepting of the different levels of skills and education around the globe and was willing to work with everyone, he did not accept mediocracy when based on mental laziness. He viewed with contempt surgeons who refused to learn and who have a grandiose perception of themselves, especially when that results in patients suffering.

Thirdly, He was truly intrigued by his field. Everything about the sinuses fascinated



Prof Stammberger during a tour of the TSESI building project in Dubai, April 2018.

him; he was amazed by the anatomy, pathophysiology of sinus disease and how surgical treatment can be enhanced by technology. In a way, he retained the little child attitude of curiosity and constant amazement.

Lastly, he was a teacher.

I am more determined than ever to preserve his legacy and to make sure that younger ENT surgeons for generations to

come will recognise his contributions and his true character. TSESI: Tarabichi Stammberger Ear and Sinus Institute will make sure of that through continuous scholarships, courses and research. Although Heinz left no offspring, many of our younger colleagues will continue to view him as the father of endoscopic sinus surgery.

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Professor Stammbberger resting after a busy day teaching at the October 2018 TSESI Course.



All happy after a very intensive course at the October 2018 TSESI Course.



Professor Stammbberger engaging trainees at the October 2018 TSESI Course.



Group photo with Professor Stammbberger at the October 2018 TSESI Course.

Muazz Tarabichi, Head of ENT Department, American Hospital Dubai, UAE.