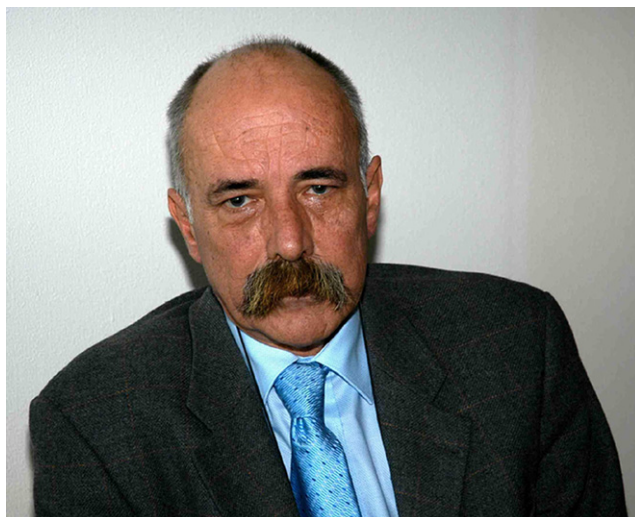


EASL Awardee 2008

Jürg Reichen, MD



It is a great privilege to present an EASL Recognition Award to Professor Jürg Reichen, one of EASL's truly outstanding members who has provided major advances in science, clinical care and teaching in the field of liver diseases.

Jürg Reichen was born on January 23, 1946 in Aarau, Switzerland. In 1971 he graduated from the University of Berne Medical School. He immediately entered the Department of Experimental Medicine of Hoffmann-La Roche AG, Basel to receive training in methods of clinical pharmacology. In 1973 he joined the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Berne, which was then headed by Professor Rudi Preisig. Rudi Preisig, who had just returned from the United States to Switzerland, was building a new and strong department which focused on liver research. It was a stimulating time at Berne during which Rudi Preisig and Ewald Weibel provided an internationally open and competitive milieu for research. There, Jürg Reichen worked on problems of liver blood flow and bile formation in my research group and I came to know him as one of the most brilliant and hard-working colleagues I have ever met.

From 1976 to 1978 Jürg Reichen was guest scientist in the Liver Unit of the Digestive Disease Branch of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, USA. From 1978 to 1979 he received his clinical training as an Intern and Resident in Medicine at Georgetown University and the Veterans Administration Hospital in Washington, DC and from 1979 to 1980 as Fellow in Gastroenterology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, Colorado, when Fred Kern was Head of Gastroenterology. From 1980 to 1984 Jürg Reichen took a position as Assistant Professor of Medicine, and from 1984 to 1985 as Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Denver, Colorado.

In 1986, Jürg Reichen returned to Berne as Professor of Medicine and Clinical Pharmacology. In 1994 he became Co-Director of Clinical Pharmacology, in 2001 Chief of Hepatology and in 2008 also Co-Director of the newly formed Clinic of Visceral Surgery and Medicine at the University Hospital Inselspital, Berne.

The early scientific work of Jürg Reichen focused on hepatobiliary transport. In his seminal paper entitled "Uptake of Bile Acids by the Perfused Rat Liver" in

the *American Journal of Physiology* in 1976, he demonstrated for the first time that bile acid uptake by the liver is mediated by a sodium dependant transport system. For this purpose he had to refine the indicator dilution method of Goreski. This required much mathematical and computational work and suited Jürg's taste and talent. With the relatively simple computers at that time, Jürg had to spend late hours at night to obtain the results.

A number of papers on blood flow and bile formation followed. Thus, Jürg used the multiple indicator dilution method to study the role of the hepatic artery in bile formation. He then employed the multiple indicator dilution technique to quantify hepatic microvascular exchange in rats with biliary cirrhosis under different treatments, such as endothelin, verapamil and bosentan. He identified the sinusoidal endothelial cell as a target of endothelin, demonstrated a correlation between endothelin levels and the decrease of hepatic function in cirrhosis and suggested that endothelin antagonists might be useful in the treatment of portal hypertension. One of Jürg's major achievements was the correlation of quantitatively assessed liver function with morphometry. In one of his more recent papers, he combined biochemical and hemodynamic studies with a quantitative assessment by morphometry of connective tissue in the liver of rats with bile duct ligation. He demonstrated that the immunosuppressant rapamycin inhibits liver fibrosis and ameliorates portal hypertension. This finding is of considerable clinical interest and Jürg is translating it into clinical medicine.

Jürg Reichen has published an impressive number of papers in prestigious journals: 164 original articles, 96 review articles and 13 editorials, and he has edited 4 books. Most importantly, he has tutored many students and fellows. From 1994 to 1996 he was Associate Editor of *Hepatology*. For all this, Jürg Reichen has received

many academic honors and awards, among others, the Research Career Development Award of the National Institutes of Health, USA, the Research Career Development Award of the Swiss National Foundation for Scientific Research, the Prize of the Swiss Society for Internal Medicine, and of the Swiss Society for Gastroenterology, the Cloetta Prize and the Lucie Bolte Prize.

A laudation for the EASL Recognition Award should also mention Jürg Reichen's activities for EASL. He has been a member of this society since 1985, was a member of its scientific committee from 1988 to 1991 and Secretary from 1989 to 1991. For two terms, from 1989 to 1993, and again from 1998 to 2004, he was Associate Editor of *Journal of Hepatology*. From 2003 to 2007, he was an Educational Councillor on the EASL Governing Board.

Jürg Reichen is not only a gifted and successful scientist, but also a broadly educated person with an interest in literature and music. An exchange of ideas with Jürg is always stimulating. His interest does not stop at the liver, but includes modern neurobiology, philosophy and politics. The last time we met he discussed the philosophy of Spinoza with me. Jürg is also a caring husband and grandfather. I take this opportunity to greet his wife Susi Reichen and to acknowledge her support of Jürg's work. Finally, on a more personal note, I want to mention that I had the best time of my life in the laboratory when I was working with Jürg at the bench in Berne, trying to unravel some of the mysteries of bile formation.

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