



Obituary

Prof. Dr. Med. Thomas Leyhe

Completely unexpected and suddenly, Prof. Dr. med. Thomas Leyhe died at the age of 61 in the night of the March 24, 2021. His early death occurred in the middle of his engaged and versatile work ending his active and rich life. His colleagues who worked with him in a clinical, research, geriatric associations or educational contexts remain deeply shocked and sad about this loss.

Thomas Leyhe was born in Würzburg, Germany where he also studied pharmacology. He became a pharmacist in 1996 and worked as a scientist at the Pharmacological Institute in Tübingen. Two years later, he began his medicine education at the Medical High School Hannover. He graduated as a physician in 1996 and became a Neurology specialist in 2000. Four years later, he added Psychiatry with a sub-speciality in *Psychotherapy* and *Clinical Geriatrics* to his resume. His psychiatric-psychotherapeutic education was completed at the University for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (UKPP) in Tübingen where he worked as a senior physician until 2013. In 2010 he received his professorship in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy at the Medical Faculty of the Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen.

In the summer of 2013, Thomas Leyhe transitioned to the Universitäre Psychiatrische Kliniken (UPK) Basel, where he worked as the medical head at the center for geriatric psychiatry. In this function, he was not only instrumental for the quality and clinical development of the psychiatric care of older patients at UPK Basel, but also contributed fundamentally to an independent category of old age psychiatry in close association with the Felix-Platter-Spital. His steady engagement for the cross-discipline- and -institutional care and his integrative skills in collaborating

with colleagues made it possible, to unify the disciplines of geriatric psychiatry and geriatric medicine beyond the clinics of UPK and the Felix-Platter-Spital as *age medicine*, a cooperation that he created successfully as a psychiatric leader of two teams. As a member to the board of trustees and vice-president of the “Stiftung Marthastift” Basel, he was particularly engaged in the quality of care for individuals with dementia.

One of his many interests focused on the education and training of professionals to become specialists in geriatric psychiatry. Another aim was the creation of the interdisciplinary area between somatics and psychiatry. Through these endeavors, Thomas and I provided leadership within the Basel regional network, a training platform for psychiatry and psychotherapy in North-West-Switzerland. Among his many attributes was attentiveness which he abundantly provided to trainees, prioritizing their wishes and needs while strengthening their motivation for the field. In both centers mentioned above, he also established a Geriatric Psychiatry university training association that focused on geriatric psychiatry and psychotherapy. He was also very engaged in the executive committee of the Swiss Society for Geriatric Psychiatry and –Psychotherapy (SGAP), where he emphasized the importance of “education and training”.

As both clinician and researcher, Thomas Leyhe was well networked. He had multiple interests, demonstrated a high level of professional engagement, and with his critical mind provided persistent and strong arguments to make his case clearly understood. At the same time, he was empathic and considerate. His consideration of others facilitated coalescence with other colleagues who had different

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ways of thinking and diverse socializations to unify. He was a warm-hearted individual who always had an open ear for the needs of others and who was helpful when asked for assistance. His behavior was quietly reserved yet balanced at the same time presenting a quiet demeanor, while placing the wishes and needs to others before his own. He left us too early. We will miss him as a human being and colleague in various contexts. We will keep him in our mind and heart within these very contexts, always appreciative of the gifts he left us.

A special interest of his was the professional training either in the curricular education of specialists, in the area of geriatric psychiatry, or in the interdisciplinary area between somatics and psychiatry. Thus, he was leading with me the Basel regional network, a training platform for psychiatry and psychotherapy in North-West-Switzerland where he was very keen in considering the wishes and needs of the trainees and to strengthen their motivation for the field. In addition, he established a university training association of Geriatric Psychiatry with the focus on geriatric psychiatry and –psychotherapy in both centers mentioned above. He was also very engaged in the Swiss Society for Geriatric Psychiatry and –Psychotherapy (SGAP), where he was involved in the executive committee of the resort “education and training”.

Thomas Leyhe was a well networked clinician and researcher with multiple interests and high

professional engagement, a critical mind with persistent and strong arguments and at the same time empathic and considerate. A colleague who brought together other colleagues with different ways of thinking and different socializations. He was a warm-hearted individual who always had an open ear for the needs of others and who was helpful when asked and needed. He was somebody who made a balanced, considerate and quiet impression, he - at the same time – did not show much of himself and hardly addressed his wishes and needs to others. He left us way too early. We will miss him as a human being and colleague in different contexts, and we will keep him in these very contexts in the best memory.

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