



International Conference celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Professor Karel Lewit

The International Conference celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Professor Karel Lewit was held on Saturday 23rd April 2016 in the Comprehensive Care Center Dobruška. 75 participants arrived from 9 countries (Slovakia, France, Poland, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, Greece and Czech Republic) to professionally and personally remember the personality of Professor Lewit.

WHY DOBRUŠKA?

The conference was opened by Mgr. Jana Týkalová, Director of the Comprehensive Care Center Dobruška. She welcomed all participants in the name of the organising committee and outlined the genesis of the inspiration for organising such a conference precisely in the Comprehensive Care Center Dobruška. Indeed, Professor Lewit was closely involved with the Center in the final years of his professional activity, from 2008 until 2012, when he held consultation and courses here. Soon after his death in the autumn of 2014, the idea of organising a conference celebrating his posthumous 100th anniversary occurred quite spontaneously. His closest colleagues and pupils were invited, thanks to a private address book provided by his family, with the question: "In what way did Professor Lewit inspire and influence you? How do you further develop his ideas in your own practice and life? Do you look for new therapeutic ways? And in what direction?" Fairly large conference facilities were initially considered. In the end the decision was made to organise a smaller, more intimate conference in the recently renovated spaces of the Center, right in Dobruška, where Professor Lewit spent a large part of his life. This implied a limited capacity of the conference room, but a very intense and friendly atmosphere.

The conference was introduced by MUDr. Dana Jensovská, the owner of the Comprehensive Care Centers in Dobruška and Prague, and the Mayor of Dobruška town, Ing. Petr Hampl. The latter invited the participants to take part, after the conference, in the celebration of the naming of the Dobruška footbridge after Professor Lewit. In the evening, in spite of rain and a strong wind, Anita Lewit-Bentley and Jana Lewitová-Vovsová, Professor Lewit's daughters, unveiled a plaque with his name in the middle of the footbridge, which he used to cross on his way to catch a train to work.

14 DIFFERENT FUNCTIONALLY CONNECTED VIEWS

Mgr. Jitka Holubcová, director of the Comprehensive Care Center Samová, conducted the proceedings through the day. The rich programme was divided into 4 groups of presentations with the following speakers: MUDr. Agnerová Viera (SK), Mgr. Hanusová Sarka, Ph.D. (CZ), doc. MUDr. Kobesová Alena, Ph.D. (CZ), Mgr. Kral Marek (CZ, CH), Mgr. Lepsiková Magdalena (CZ), Bc. Lewitová Clara-Maria Helena (CZ, A), Nováková Petra, DiS. (CZ), Oberrauch Christine P.T. (IT), Dr. Russo Giancarlo (IT), Dr. med. Sadowski Andrzej (PL), Dr. Silvestre Dominique (F), Prof. Dr. Vasiljeva Ludmila (RUS), Mgr. Veverková Michaela (CZ), Mgr. Lewitová-Vovsová Jana (CZ).

The presentations were very different and colourful - memories and specialised talks, about Professor Lewit's human qualities and his excellent clinical expertise. Doc. Kobesova and MUDr. Agnerova talked about how they prepared together video teaching material for manual medicine. Further developments in this line were presented by Mgr. Hanusova from the Physiotherapy Center in Prague, who partially unveiled a few examples from the new edition under preparation. Mgr. Lepsikova presented the last study still carried out with Professor Lewit. The paper was published in the journal International Musculoskeletal Medicine in August 2015, nearly a year after Professor Lewit's death. Several presentations included practical demonstrations (Dr. Sadowski, Prof. Vasiljeva, Dr. Silvestre, Mgr. Vovsova-Lewitova).

Outside the initial programme, Dr. Spiros Michalakis (GR) from the Dr. Karel Lewit International Institute, presented the Institute and his professional collaboration with Professor Lewit. An unusual contribution was a poem by Craig Liebenson D.C. (USA), read by Professor Anita Lewit-Bentley. Craig Liebenson was one of the participants unable to come to the Conference, who sent short video contributions in which they remembered Professor Lewit. Among others, Maria Perri D.C. (USA), Dr. Robert Lardner (USA) a Dr. Marc White (C) contributed in this way.

Petra Novakova, DiS., Chairwoman of the Board, presented the newly founded Karel Lewit Foundation Trust. More information about this foundation trust can be found on www.karellewit.cz. The site will shortly have a link to the film "To touch, to feel, to apprehend" (made in 2010 by Kveta Pribylova), which was shown during the Conference. The film shows Professor Lewit talking about his way of thinking about diagnosis and therapy. He describes his work and, furthermore, the film shows his hands during palpations, a subject mentioned by several speakers during the conference, since they were his most perfect instrument for examining a patient. Petra Novakova also mentioned one of Professor Lewit's pupils and a colleague of many Czech and foreign therapists, Mgr. Vera Verchozinova, unexpectedly deceased last autumn.

The next paragraph proves that all speakers were true pupils of their professor. Doc. Kobesova mentioned the Lewit therapy fundamentals: "Examine - treat - examine again". Mgr. Veverkova went on "It's important that the patient can experience his improvement". Upon which Mgr. Hanušová remembered that Professor Lewit used to tell patients "And now get a taste of how you feel. How good does it feel now....?" Which complements what we heard from Christine Oberrauch: "Listen carefully, observe with your eyes and use the return from the patient to help him." And Clara Lewitova noted: "Observing with all our senses is important in order to find what there is in front of us, even if what we find is not what we wished to find". Dr Russo then mentioned: "He concentrated all his time on the patient. He saw all parts of his body and the way they connect." Mgr Kral mentioned that: "Our specialisation as therapists prevents us from seeing the whole picture - we need adequate communication with the patient and the doctors, we must pay attention to the way all elements of the system are connected." Dr Michalakis noted that: "Professor Lewit was always reflecting on something." Christine Oberrauch mentioned another of Lewit's councils: "functional thinking is more important than any knowledge of just facts." And Clara Lewitova expressed a wish: "Continue, seek, discover. Functional thinking is in its beginnings."

The conference languages were Czech and English. Mutual understanding was greatly helped by a team of translators, Mgr. Jindriskaka Dvoráková and PhDr. Daniela Zitkova, Ph.D. with technical support from Vladimir Auska's V.A. Servis.

We are glad that MUDr. Jana Jandova, President of the Czech Society for Musculoskeletal Medicine, MUDr. Viera Agnerova, President of the Slovak Society for Musculoskeletal Medicine and Sarka Smejkalova, vicepresident of UNIFY Czech Republic (Czech Physiotherapy Association) were able to attend the conference. Dr. Jandova had the excellent idea to invite Jana Lewitova to sing at the close of the conference. We thus could listen to a folk song about "functional headaches" performed by a well known Czech mezzosoprano singer of baroque and renaissance music.

CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

The entire conference proceedings were filmed by a team of graduates of the Czech Film academy (FAMU) and are in the process of being transformed into an approximately 15 minute documentary. The documentary will be made accessible to the public on the website of the Center at www.ckp-dobrichovice.cz. Photos from the conference can be seen on the Facebook and web pages of the Center as well.

IMPACT OF THE MEETING

While not everybody agreed about the correct definition of a "trigger point" and spent a long time discussing it, everybody agreed upon the personality of Professor Lewit. A truly memorable personality, as attested by all participants present, as well as by colleagues from abroad who remembered their teacher on videos. The conference has shown that the functional approach to diagnostics and therapy is still alive! Its application by different speakers and pupils may well be very different and there may be individual national influences. We are pleased that colleagues from different countries could meet and we could thus see different approaches to functional disorders. It was important to realise that there is no "method of Professor Lewit", but that Professor Lewit taught and inspired us all with his approach to thought and work and it is now up to us to search for our own therapeutical ways.

ECHOES FROM THE CONFERENCE

Bc. Clara-Maria Helena Lewitova (physiotherapist, Professor Lewit's daughter): "I would like to thank you for the beautiful birthday celebration. Daddy would have been happy! Thanks to everybody for the enormous, visible and invisible, work."

Profesor RNDr. Anita Lewit-Bentley, Ph.D. (scientist, Professor Lewit's daughter): "Thank you all very much for a very pleasant and an extremely interesting day last Saturday. I learnt a lot of new things and, except for a few moments, I understood all that was talked about! At last I met all those people I had only heard of in my parents' letters. Congratulations for a perfect organisation of the event, everything worked like a charm - and with a smile!

Mgr. Marek Kral (fysiotherapist, speaker): "As soon as I returned home I wanted to give you my praise: though as a complete novice to conferences I cannot really judge, the entire day seemed to me perfectly organised, very well mastered and overall, extremely successful. You have my deep admiration!"

Mgr. Jindriska Dvorakova (translator): "Thank you for the opportunity to translate at an exceptionally interesting conference. I was honoured to make the acquaintance with the personality of Professor Lewit, his working methods. I also appreciate the excellent organisation of the entire event. The positive feedback on the quality of translation during the conference were a pleasure for myself and my colleague. The arrangement of the conference and the refreshment venues were very well done. I really appreciate your creativity!"

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The conference was supported by contributors, Golden Ticket holders and other entities. We really appreciate the generosity of all of them, it enabled us to organize professional simultaneous interpretation throughout the whole event. That would not be possible without the great support.

Golden Contributors:

- Dr. GIANCARLO RUSSO (IT), Doctor in Physiotherapy, Neuro Rehabilitation Specialist-400 Euro
- MĚSTO DOBRICHOVICE (CZ), - 400 Euro

Golden Ticket Holders (100 euro):

- MUDr. DANA JENSOVSKA (CZ), Comprehensive Care Centers in Dobrichovice and Prague Owner, Doctor of Medicine
- Mgr. et Mgr. JANA TYKALOVA (CZ), Director of Comprehensive Care Center Dobrichovice and Roseta Prague, Physical Therapist and Psychologist
- Mgr. JITKA HOLUBCOVA (CZ), Director of Comprehensive Care Center Samova Prague, Physical Therapist
- Dr. med. ANDREJ SADOWSKI (PL), Doctor of Medicine, Teacher of Manual Medicine (tought with Prof. Lewit)
- ALEXANDRA MASNEROVA (CZ), Physical Therapist, Certified Craniosacral Osteopath
- Doc. MUDr. ALENA KOBESOVA, PhD. (CZ), Educational Deputy at the Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine Clinic of the 2nd Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and Faculty hospital in Motol, the Vice-Dean for non-medical subjects at the 2nd Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, member of the Scientific Council of the 2nd Faculty of Medicine, Charles University
- Dr. SPIROS MICHALAKIS (GR), Doctor of Neuropractic/Osteopathy, President at Dr Karel Lewit International Institute, Greece.
- Dr. GILBERT VETTER (FR), General Practitioner, Bartenheim
- Dr. JEAN-DANIEL HEITZMANN (FR), General Practitioner, Osteopath

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Other Contributors:

- JUDr. Mgr. BOHDAN ZACEK, Prague attorney

*Notes prepared by Hana Sladka
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