



GENE KLINGBERG*

A Dedicated Teacher and An Excellent Physician

*Şinasi Özsoylu MD***

Dr. Klingberg arrived in Ankara on April 1, 1957, when İhsan Doğramacı (originally Hacettepe) Children's Hospital was under construction. Dr. Klingberg and Dr. Joe Wray (who was our first chief resident) took us (Dr. Ahmet Ajun, Dr. Sevinç Oral and me) to Telsizler Health Center (a slum area in those days)

six days a week to teach us modern pediatric techniques in an outpatient setting. Although this was a new way of teaching for our mentors, Dr. Klingberg easily adapted himself and us to an uneasy situation. Although we complained sometimes about the conditions, Dr. Klingberg always did his best without showing any sign of disappointment. In addition to patient care and environmental studies we had our first Journal Club experiences in that health center. Because laboratory facilities were not available, we were taught to use simple methods including the growth chart for evaluation of child nutrition. Ear, nose, throat and eye ground examinations became a routine part of the physical examination in pediatrics with Dr. Klingberg's astonishing patience and firm insistence.

Although we were very fond of inpatient teaching, in a relatively short time we began to understand the importance of outpatient care. When I look back I can see that the hospital was not ready for inpatient care. We were very fortunate to have had mentors like Dr. Klingberg and Dr. Wray, who knew the best patient care in rural settings. In a short time we became aware that Dr. Klingberg's questions were the best stimulation for us. The first exchange transfusion was also performed in Turkey by Dr. Klingberg and Dr. Wray in an obstetric theater at Ankara Medical Faculty in May 1957.

In June 1957, Dr. Klingberg and Dr. Wray took us to the mother and child center at Yenimahalle where they demonstrated how to practice pediatrics in an urban setting. The importance of routine immunizations was shown to us by analyzing cases with polio sequelae and/or diphtheria, which were prevalent in Turkey at that time.

When the outpatient clinic was completed, Dr. Klingberg began teaching us with "snap diagnosis". He taught us with simple laboratory tests, including radiosopic

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examination. Hand-washing became routine after the examination of each patient. With his patience, every resident began to operate the Beckman spectrophotometer, and the Van Slyke for gas analysis. Determination of bilirubin, glucose, calcium, etc., became a routine part of the pediatric residency program in this new hospital. Some patients were visited at home since inpatient care was not yet available. These visits were helpful for detection of the source of some infections and for evaluation of our patients' living conditions.

Through Journal Club discussions we learned to criticize our so-called classical knowledge. Although Dr. Klingberg did not know Turkish, under his guidance and questioning, history-taking became the most important part of patient evaluation.

On Sunday, July 8, 1957, I had a call about the admission of a premature baby (Levent) with hyperbilirubinemia. On my arrival at the hospital I found Dr. Klingberg busy opening boxes to take out an incubator. With the improvement of this very first premature baby, several premature infants were brought to the hospital. For that reason our hospital began to operate by opening a premature nursery. In a short period of time the "Observation Ward" had to be opened because of some referrals from other hospitals. Dr. Klingberg used to change diapers during rounds because of the shortage of nurses, which was a good example to all of us.

Since Dr. Doğramacı was extremely busy with administrative work, including funding of the hospital, teaching was basically dependent on Dr. Klingberg's effort. He also established biochemistry and hematology laboratories as well as the first blood bank in a hospital in Turkey. Dr. Klingberg and Dr. Wray were available to the residents virtually 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except for 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. every Thursday when Dr. Klingberg went to church.

Dr. Klingberg's ward rounds were an exceptional experience for all residents. Following inpatient admissions, mortality conferences, patient discussions and X-ray meetings were started under his guidance. He was a one-man army for the success of a new hospital.

Dr. Klingberg came to Turkey for six months, but fortunately stayed in this hospital 17 months until September 1, 1958. Four years after his return to St-Louis Children's Hospital he was appointed as Professor and Head of the Department of Pediatrics at the West Virginia School of Medicine at Morgantown. He dedicated himself to his children and wife (Mrs. Gene Klingberg) because of her chronic disabling disease. He served as Professor Emeritus following his retirement in 1986 from Morgantown.

After marrying his second wife Rita, he moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he helped with the education of medical students until his death on May 20, 1995.

Dr. Klingberg kept his interest in İhsan Doğramacı Children's hospital and in his former residents. He visited İhsan Doğramacı Children's Hospital in 1974, 1983 and 1989 and followed his former residents in Turkey as well as abroad.

As his former residents at İhsan Doğramacı Children's Hospital, we all owe him a lot, not only with regard to patient care, stimulation, teaching and being so thoughtful and kind to us, but also in terms of helping this hospital function smoothly and establishing the laboratories. We learned a great deal from Dr. Klingberg in every respect. He was a great man and excellent physician and teacher. He showed interest in his residents in every respect. With his death we lost a great friend, and the medical world lost one excellent example of a physician and teacher.