

## Luděk Kubička, 1924–2014



Professor Luděk Kubička, of Prague, died on 14 December 2014, at the age of 90 years. Luděk was a leading addiction researcher both in the Czech Republic and internationally, and was admired, respected and loved by students and colleagues world-wide.

Luděk studied psychology and philosophy at Charles University in Prague, graduating in 1951 and defending his doctoral thesis in 1965. He began his career as a child clinical psychologist, with a strong interest in research. He led work on the Czech adaptation of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, which for decades became the basic diagnostic tool for Czech pediatric psychologists.

Luděk joined the Psychiatric Research Institute, the predecessor of what is now the Prague Psychiatric Centre, shortly after its creation in 1963. There, during the 1970s, he devoted himself to research on interpersonal relations and psychiatric symptomatology in neurotic and other hospitalized patients (e.g. [1,2]). In 1970 Luděk began a study of alcoholism treatment outcomes in Prague's largest alcoholism treatment center. Meticulously designed, the study included random assignment to shorter and longer treatment programs and repeated long-term follow-ups. The extensive research report [3] could not be published in international journals, because government officials believed that acknowledging health and social problems such as alcoholism would reflect negatively on the image of a socialist country. After overcoming many obstacles, Luděk's treatment outcome study eventually became well known and valued among treatment professionals [4,5], including

an English translation of the study kept in the library of the US National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in Washington, DC.

During the 1980s Luděk embarked on a prospective epidemiological study of alcohol use by Czech men and women that met with considerable international acclaim. During the years of totalitarianism he never deviated from his high standards of scientific research, and refused to reach any compromise with the communist régime for the sake of an easy life or special advantages. Despite substantial political constraints, Luděk succeeded in gathering drinking pattern data from representative general population samples of Prague men in 1983 and 1988 and Prague women in 1987. When the 'Velvet Revolution' of 1989 ended the 41-year Communist era in Czechoslovakia, Luděk was overjoyed and almost immediately renewed his collaboration with the international scientific community. Luděk became involved in the activities of the Kettil Bruun Society for Social and Epidemiological Research on Alcohol, and in 1993 was cofounder of the International Research Group on Gender and Alcohol [6]. He expanded personal collaborations with two US projects that he had previously communicated with only via mail: Dr Kaye Fillmore's Collaborative Alcohol-Related Longitudinal Project (e.g. [7,8]) and the multi-national GENACIS (Gender, Alcohol, and Culture: An International Study) Project studying cultural and gender-related influences on alcohol use patterns and related problems (e.g. [9,10]).

With general population data on Czech alcohol use patterns in the pre-revolution 1980s, Luděk and his student and colleague Ladislav Csémy collected post-revolution drinking data in 1992 and 1993 and conducted groundbreaking analyses of changes in men's and women's drinking during a period of rapid social and economic growth [11–14]. Luděk's leadership role in research on gender-specific effects of social change on alcohol use and alcohol-related problems was honored at a special plenary session at the 2003 Kettil Bruun Symposium in Krakow, Poland. Papers from the session were later published as a special journal section (Social Change and Gendered Drinking: A Symposium in Honour of Luděk Kubička. *Addiction*, 100(12), 2005, 1760–1802).

Other important works by Luděk and colleagues include his development of the Czech version of the European Addiction Severity Index [15] and his introduction and translation into Czech of the Cloninger Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire [16]. Luděk was also one of the principal researchers on the trail-blazing study of children born as a result of unwanted pregnancies [17–19]. This work resulted not only in highly acclaimed and oft-cited

publications, but also saw significant changes made to legislation and policies related to planned parenthood, not only in the Czech Republic, but abroad. Luděk's scientific excellence, productivity and impact were recognized by many prizes and honors, among these the National Award for Psychiatric Research, the Prague Psychiatric Centre Award for life-time achievement in scientific work, and the Addictionology Prize from the Society of Addictive Disease.

In Luděk's personal life he was an unusually modest, yet surprisingly sociable man, with a subtle sense of intelligent humour. He was a highly educated man who appreciated history and literature. He not only loved classical music but was also an expert in the field. Colleagues in the GENACIS Project were impressed with his fluency in numerous languages and recalled that, despite his modesty, he was never shy in debating alcohol research issues, from cross-culturally comparable standard drink sizes to longitudinal statistical methods. Luděk and his wife Zdeňka enjoyed a long and fulfilling marriage. With love and mutual respect, together they overcame a period of illness and various other difficulties, while being able to rejoice in the time spent with their children. Luděk's survivors include daughter Elena and son Jiří. He took great pleasure in his two grandchildren and one great-grandchild, providing them with encouragement and wherever possible supporting their education.

Luděk Kubicka was a gifted and inspiring research scientist and a generous and loyal colleague and friend. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

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