

In memory of Professor Thomas Diepgen – from all Thomas’ EDEN friends

It is with some sadness that we announce the death of our dear friend, Thomas Diepgen. Thomas died peacefully from a chronic illness on March 27th at his home in Heidelberg.

Thomas was one of the founders of EDEN - the idea of which began in a conversation with Luigi Naldi and Hywel Williams in a café in Marseilles in 1995. Even before then, Thomas had been one of the few academic dermatologists interested in dermato-epidemiology and environmental health. Thomas had a very distinguished career as a researcher, teacher and was always in demand as an international speaker. He published over 300 peer-reviewed papers, but perhaps he will be best known for ensuring that keratinocyte cancers are recognised as an occupational disease and eligible for reimbursement in the German health laws. Thomas’ earlier work in Erlangen, Germany, developed diagnostic criteria for atopic eczema. The criteria were innovative in that instead of trying to define atopic eczema as a binary yes/no phenomenon, Thomas maintained that it was more appropriate to think of atopic eczema as a continuum which could be measured by a score. Thomas went to the University of Heidelberg in 1999 where he became director of the Institut of Sozialmedizin. Thomas was an international figure in the field of occupational dermatitis and it is rare to find an international guideline or review on the topic without Thomas’ name on it.

Research and lecturing achievements aside, it is Thomas’ support, vision and enthusiasm for EDEN that he will be remembered by. Thomas was always at the centre of EDEN activities, whether this was a working group or a social gathering. The pinnacle of Thomas’ EDEN work was when he organised a fantastic EDEN/IDEA meeting in Bamberg in 1998. Thomas was kind, helpful and friendly to new and older members. He was highly collaborative and was always happy to support others with their ideas and plans. We remember Thomas as a major figure in the development of dermato-epidemiology as scientific discipline in its own right, but most of all as a friend who was always full of good cheer and enthusiasm.

Thomas is fondly remembered by his wife Keiko and his son Kento.



Figure caption: Thomas Diepgen of Heidelberg – one of the founding fathers of EDEN