angle and narrow-angle glaucoma; narrow-angle and angle-closure glaucoma: a definition, diagnosis, surgical versus medical treatment; ocular hypertension; breakthrough in medical treatment of glaucoma; selection of surgery in open and narrow-angle glaucoma; laser iridectomy; use of visual fields; value of diurnal curve. Further information from the Secretariat, POB 16271, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Obituary

Petrus Johannes Waardenburg, MD

Dr P. J. Waardenburg, of Arnhem, Holland, the ophthalmic geneticist renowned for his description of Waardenburg's syndrome, died on 23 September 1979 aged 93.

He was born in 1886 and studied medicine at the Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht from 1904 to 1911. He then followed specialisation in ophthalmology under Professor Snellen Jr, of Utrecht, who promoted him to receive the MD in 1913 for his thesis on research in human inheritance of various physiological and pathological characteristics of the eye. In the same year he married and also studied under Professor Fuchs at Vienna. At the end of that year he settled in the Dutch country town of Arnhem as an ophthalmologist, continuing to practise there until 1952.

For the years 1934–40 he was external university lecturer in medical genetics at the Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht. In 1931–5 he was secretary of the Netherlands Ophthalmological Society and in 1949–63 president of the Netherlands Anthropogenetic Society, of which he was a founder member. He was made honorary member of these 2 societies as well as of similar Danish, Italian, and German societies. In 1954 he was made honorary doctor of the Rijksuniversiteit in Leiden and of the Wilhelms Universität of Munster in 1964. In 1957 he received the Royal decoration Order of the Dutch Lion

and in 1959 the Snellen medal. In 1965 he founded the Waardenburg prize for special merit in the medical-genetic field. Between 1961 and 1974 the 3 volumes of his book *Genetics and Ophthalmology* were published. Until 1970 he gave genetic advice in paternity cases in the Dutch legal courts and genetic counselling.

Dr Waardenburg was a talented painter and musician, and these skills are reflected in the cultural abilities of his family. He is survived by his wife, 1 medical son and 4 daughters (of these 1 pair of identical twin daughters were obviously a great joy to his inquiring mind and enabled him to conduct twin studies on the spot).

Between 1910 and 1970 he published 267 papers in all. They included original observations on albinism¹ and many other hereditary conditions. He contributed the chapter on heredity in eye disease to *Modern Trends in Ophthalmology*.

Waardenburg's syndrome, or more fully, the van der Hoeve-Halbertsma-Waardenburg-Klein syndrome, was first described in its characteristic feature of outward displacement of the inner canthi causing blepharophimosis,^{2–4} but Waardenburg was the first to correlate this with congenital deafness and pigmentary defects of the iris and head hair.⁵

What amazed everyone so much about his research work and publications was that he did nearly everything unaided. The fieldwork, correspondence, most of the typing and drawing he did himself; only later in his life did the occasional secretary and pedigree artist give some help. He would not acknowledge anything he had not verified himself and was strict and accurate about all he did and wrote. Even in his last years there was a yearning to understand more.

His friends and colleagues all admired his immense knowledge and also his readiness to help fellow doctors and students. His kindness and modesty were a particularly endearing aspect of him. When I last saw him he was still trying to complete research studies even at the age of 89. He secured for himself a permanent place in the history of ophthalmology with his original work in ophthalmic genetics and his magnificent textbooks on the subject.

K. F. WILLIAMSON

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