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Obituary for Yves Lecrubier

Yves Lecrubier, our very dear colleague and friend, passed away in June after a long illness that he fought with incredible energy and dignity. Yves Lecrubier has been undoubtedly one of the key persons for the promotion and development of Psychiatry in Europe. During the last 25 years he played an essential role as the leading figure in many aspects of our discipline. From the very beginning he was aware that, to be influential both in the scientific and the political fields, Psychiatry in Europe had to speak with a single voice. For this reason he identified accurately that the first step of this process was to launch a journal which could rapidly be recognized not only as an “international” journal but as a fully European one. The very journal you are reading today started life as “Psychiatry and Psychobiology” in 1985 with Yves Lecrubier of course as one of its three founding editors. Four years later the journal was renamed “European Psychiatry” and is now recognized as a significant force in disseminating scientific information within our field. Yves then joined the Association of European Psychiatrists (now renamed the European Psychiatric Association), which had just been created in Strasbourg. He became rapidly an essential member of the executive committee of this society. As a counselor of the EPA, Yves developed multiple initiatives and perhaps the most far-reaching has been the creation of a European forum for young psychiatrists. Most of the colleagues currently in charge of the main academic or research centers in Europe participated in this forum.

But by training Yves Lecrubier was not only a clinician, he was also a very distinguished psychopharmacologist. He collaborated closely with Pierre Simon’s laboratory at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris before becoming a founding member – once again – of Daniel Widlocher’s research department in the same hospital. During these years Yves’ personal contributions in psychiatry research have been known worldwide (biological correlates of negative symptoms in schizophrenia, creation of appropriate diagnostic tools such as the MINI developed in collaboration with D. Sheehan, supervision of large epidemiological studies conducted under the umbrella of WHO, refinement of the methodological approach of clinical trials, to mention just a few). The manuscripts published by Yves in these fields received in this period the highest ranks for citations by other authors. So, both as a psychiatrist and as a

clinical pharmacologist Yves joined 15 years ago the ECNP Executive Committee and was later elected president of this association, holding that office from 2002 to 2004, an auspicious period for ECNP as we were recently reminded by David Nutt and Michel Hamon.

During the three last years of his life Yves succeeded in achieving what was one of his dearest projects, notably the setting up and managing of a European “network of networks.” The main goal of this initiative (ECNP Networks Initiative) was to facilitate the collaboration between existing or recently created networks and to build up a huge database of thousands of patients, freely accessible to the official members of the networks. The project is encountering great success as evidenced by the numerous awards received from the EU funding commissions. One of Yves’ wishes was to associate this initiative to the EPA, a wish that we hope will be fulfilled in the future.

Regarding this last period I would like to add a personal testimony. In spite of his illness Yves dedicated all his efforts to the success of his networks project. He never mentioned the fatigue and side effects linked to the treatments he received and he continued to work with incredible energy and enthusiasm. He was capable of leading important meetings as if he were in perfectly good health and nobody was aware of the disease he had to fight. He was working in the office next door to mine and I never heard him complain even for a second about his condition. His passing is a terrible loss for our specialty since Yves had certainly many projects still to achieve. It is a terrible loss for his wife, Marie-Hélène, and his children, Aude and Jean-Marie, to whom we express all our sympathy. And it is a terrible loss for his friends, who will miss his kindness, his wonderful creativity, his extreme generosity and his elegance.

On behalf of the EPA Executive Committee.

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