

Obituary

Colin Boothman Hindley, 7 July 1923–12 May 2000

Emeritus Professor Colin Hindley of the Institute of Education, University of London died on 12 May following surgery for lung cancer, aged 76. He will be remembered by many colleagues not only for his research on child development and individual differences but also for his personal support to individuals and organisations concerned with child development, both in this country and abroad. He was a founding Committee Member of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development and Advisory Editor for the *Journal of Human Development*. His work as a founding member of the Association of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines from 1958 onwards ensured its strong interdisciplinary base and a highly productive future. Perhaps even more significantly, many would wish to emphasise his particularly distinguished contribution as the founding Psychology Editor of the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines* from 1959–1969. In recognition of his long service to the Association at so many levels, he was made an Honorary Member on his retirement.

Following school at Bolton, he graduated in Medicine at Manchester in 1946 and then served a year as a House Physician at Hope Hospital, Salford, working with both adults and children. He never practised medicine subsequently although he did retain his membership of the British Medical Association, at least for a time. He became interested in Psychology and in 1947 moved on immediately to the Department of Psychology at University College London as a student when Professor Sir Cyril Burt was its head. He became a member of the British Psychological Society in the same year, atypically applying straight away for additional membership in four of its specialised sections (Educational, Social, Medical, and Mathematical and Statistical), clearly indicating his interests and determined focus. He was awarded a degree in Psychology with first class honours in 1949.

Colin was then appointed Research Psychologist at the Centre for the Study of Human Development at the London Institute of Education. The Child Study Research Project there had just been set up in 1949 under the general direction of Professor Alan Moncrieff, Director of the Institute of Child Health, and Miss D. E. M. Gardner, Reader in Child Development at the Institute of Education. Colin worked with Terence Moore and Professor Jack Tizard and collaborated with Professor Jack Tanner at the Institute of Child Health. In 1954, the International Children's Centre (Paris) for Co-ordinated Growth Studies was established and research teams in Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, and Zurich agreed to collaborate and collect data following the London Project. Colin served as Psychological Adviser to this Co-ordinated Growth Studies Group, although subsequently the psychological investigations in Paris and Zurich were unable to continue. He became Director of the London Longitudinal Research Project in 1966. He was elected a

Fellow of the British Psychological Society in 1965 and served on its Council in later years. In 1967, he was appointed a Recognised Teacher of the University of London and in 1972, he became Professor of Child Development at the Institute of Education where he remained for the rest of his professional life until his retirement in 1984. His inaugural lecture, given 7 years later in 1979, was entitled "Conceptual and Methodological Issues in the Study of Child Development", reflecting again his enduring interests. This lecture ranged widely and elaborated extensively on the many technical problems of assessment, the issue of group and individual differences, and the making of predictions. It concluded by stressing the importance of "trying to derive general principles concerning processes, within the aim of understanding them better, and hence of being in a better position to influence them in an informed way"—an objective still being pursued at the present time.

As would be expected, many of his publications relate to data from the Longitudinal Research Project. Papers were presented at many conferences at home and overseas and he also participated in radio and TV programmes. Although he made considerable efforts to ensure that the data would be preserved for future use when it had to be moved from the Institute of Education to the Senate House, these were apparently to no avail—a matter of considerable irritation to him in recent years.

For a time, he was adviser on research in child development and nursery care to the Ministry of Health in Cuba. Perhaps less predictably or more unexpectedly, he also held an appointment from 1958–1962 as Honorary Psychotherapist to the Woodberry Down Child Guidance Clinic when it was under the direction of Dr G. Stewart Prince.

At any level, in his work and as a busy editor and committee member, his rigour and meticulous care about data were always apparent. The critical and high standards pursued in his own work were matched by his similar expectations of others. However, although his firm resolve on many issues and objectives was self-evident, he was not blinkered from excluding the consideration of more divergent views, providing they were well argued.

Away from his time-consuming professional work, Colin still lived a very full life. He held strong convictions about politics, justice, and safeguarding the environment. He was also very supportive at a personal level to many of his colleagues in times of difficulty. As a young person, he had joined the Communist Party but became disenchanted and left it after the Hungarian uprising in 1956. He remained an active member of his local Labour Party until 2 years ago. His leisure interests included gardening, modern art, jazz, foreign travel (he was good at languages), and, perhaps paradoxically, the business of stocks and shares.

The leadership he gave to his academic colleagues and

to both the Association of Child Psychology and Psychiatry as well as its *Journal* was forthright, sometimes pedantic, but always provoking and usually productive. Colin made an enduring contribution to establishing the Association and its Journal and enhanced their continuing success, as well as personally promoting the value of multidisciplinary approaches to child development.

His colleagues will miss his meticulousness and his critical acumen, as well as his dry humour and friendship.

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