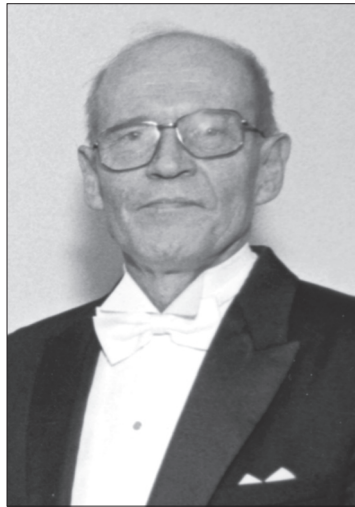


Docent Urpo Kiistala 1936–2010



Sadly, Docent Urpo Kiistala passed away on 13 August 2010 in Helsinki. He was born in Helsinki on 24 March 1936.

Kiistala took his matriculation examination in Helsinki, passing with excellent grades. He graduated from the Medical Faculty of the University of Helsinki in 1962 and completed his training in dermatology and venereology in 1968. He received his PhD in 1976, with a thesis based on original research into the suction blister method.

He was appointed Associate Professor in Dermatology and Venereology at the University of Helsinki in 1979 and was later rated to be competent to the professorship.

After working for a year in the Department of Electron Microscopy he held the position of clinical instructor in the Department of Dermatology in Helsinki in 1966–1973 and associate professor in 1986 and 1991. His teaching skills were highly respected and he was later often invited to give presentations in the field of dermatology and venereology.

Kiistala's main clinical career was as a Chief Physician in the Department of Dermatology in the Central Military Hospital (Tilkka) in Helsinki in 1974–1999. During that time numerous young physicians worked under his guidance and many of them specialized in dermatology. His former trainees remember him as a skilful clinician, whose broad knowledge and real love of dermatology were always evident in his everyday work. Kiistala was ranked as a medical lieutenant-colonel. He continued private practice after his retirement and had numerous grateful patients.

Kiistala was innovative in his research. After gaining training in the Department of Electron Microscopy, he applied this knowledge to investigating the ultrastructural characteristics

of the skin. He can be regarded as one of the pioneers of this field in Finland.

In 1960s he invented the suction blister method, by which it is possible to separate viable epidermis from the dermis. The three original papers on the suction blister method have been cited more than 700 times in the scientific literature. The applications of this method are numerous. It has been used to study blistering diseases, drug metabolism, isolation of pure epidermal cells, and to investigate skin collagen synthesis and degradation. Since the method is only minimally invasive and no scars are formed after inducing blisters, it is highly suitable for use in humans.

Kiistala also studied the regulation and disorders of sweating, especially possible treatments for hyperhidrosis. He was an expert in this field in Finland and wrote numerous articles and textbook chapters about sweating. Kiistala was also involved in the development of decompression devices to treat leg ulcers.

Numerous studies in the field of military medicine were performed under his guidance. One of these studies was to find the means to prevent frostbite.

Urpo Kiistala was a highly cultured person and had a great variety of interests, such as gardening, flora and collecting antiques. He was always good company and his rippling laughter was his trademark. Many joyful events happened around Kiistala and we, as friends, remember them with great fondness. He led an active family life with four children and his wife Raija.

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