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History page: leaders in MSK radiology

Hans Jessen Panner, 1871-1930

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Abstract

This history page in the series “Leaders in musculoskeletal radiology” is dedicated to the memory and achievements of the Danish radiologist Hans Jessen Panner whose name is connected to the medical eponym Panner’s disease.

Keywords

- ▶ **Panner**
- ▶ **History**
- ▶ **Radiography**

Main text

Dr. Hans Jessen Panner (▶ **Fig.1**) is a famous Danish pioneer in radiology born in 1871.

He graduated as Medical Doctor in 1896 in Copenhagen¹.

The first years of his medical profession were dedicated to internal medicine.

In 1905, he decided to devote his future career to radiology. In that year, he was appointed head of the roentgen clinic of the St-Joseph's Hospital in Copenhagen, a position which he held until 1912, when he became the chief of the radiology department of the National Hospital (Rigshospitalet) in the same city¹ (▶ **Fig.2**).

Like many of his contemporaries in radiology, his main interest dealt with a combination of radiologic subdisciplines including gastro-intestinal radiology and bone and joint radiology.

In 1921, Dr. Panner was one of the founding co-editors of Acta Radiologica, the journal of the Scandinavian radiological societies, including Holland and Switzerland at that time¹. In this journal, he published consecutively groundbreaking contributions on osteochondral dissecans (1924)², “capsular” chondromatosis (currently known as synovial chondromatosis) (1926)³ and vertebra plana (Calvé) (1927)⁴. The paper on capsular chondromatosis was written in French, which was in the early years one of the official languages of Acta Radiologica in addition to English and German. This contributed to the international impact of the paper in the medical and radiological society.

His special interest focused on the group of “juvenile osteochondroses”, such as Köhler, Perthes and Scheuermann disease. His name will be always connected with “juvenile osteochondrosis” of the capitellum of the humerus, now universally known as “Panner's disease”. His article on the subject, dating from 1929, described very accurately the mild clinical presentation, young age of occurrence (between 7 and 10-year-old), radiologic features and spontaneous resolution of the disorder. It became a landmark classic⁵.

Although Panner was mainly known as a musculoskeletal (MSK) radiologist, he also was heavily engaged in radiology in general and devoted a lot of his time to studies in roentgen/radium treatment of malignant tumors, which by many prominent radiologists at that time was regarded contraindicated. Panner concluded:»...*the technique that had been used has been in accordance with the principals for the time being*», and «...*to all appearances certain dangerous reactions seem to be implied in the roentgen- as well as radium therapy, even when the generally accepted therapeutic methods are used. However, such reactions may be exceptions, and consequently it should be considered perfectly safe to use radium for the treatment of inoperable malignant neoforation*».

Dr. Panner wrote two reports about «*Roentgen treatment of metrorrhagia and fibroma*». In 1914 he published a review of radiotherapy of deep-seated tumors. He also conducted studies of roentgen treatment of Graves disease.

He also devoted a lot of time to gastrointestinal radiology with a special focus on diagnosing duodenal ulcer, ileocecal invaginations and techniques of visualizing gallbladder stones, irrespective of their calcium content by placing the patients in different positions and exposing to projections in different planes. He published in 1922 the first textbook in Scandinavia entitled «*Radiodiagnosis of diseases affecting the intestinal canal*», He served as president of the Danish Radiological Society from 1922 to 1924 and was founding member of the council of the Northern Association of Medical Radiology and president of its fifth congress held in Copenhagen in 1927¹.

Dr. Panner was a well-appreciated radiologist and leading figure in Denmark and Scandinavia.

Suffering from gout and diabetes, he retired in 1928 and he died in 1930. His obituary was written in “his journal” by another icon of Scandinavian and European radiology, dr. Christian Ingerslev Baastrup¹.



Figure 1. Photograph of Dr. H.J.Panner (used with permission from reference 1).



Figure 2. Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen 1910 (public domain).

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