

Anne Szarewski

Clinician who led research showing testing for HPV on cells taken during cervical screening would pick up cases of pre-cancer that were missed by standard testing

Anne Marie Szarewski, clinical consultant (b 1959; q University of London, 1982), d 24 August 2013.

Cervical cancer was the focus of Anne Szarewski's research career. She was one of the first to develop an understanding of the link between the human papillomavirus (HPV) and the disease, and how screening for HPV was as important as the routine smear test. In 1995 she led a study showing that testing for the presence of HPV on cells taken during the smear could pick up precancerous abnormalities missed by the routine test.¹ More studies followed, and she eventually became the principal investigator on the GlaxoSmithKline team that developed the bivalent HPV vaccine. This was used when the government first introduced routine vaccinations for girls in 2008. In 2012 it was replaced by the quadrivalent vaccine which additionally protects against genital warts.

As soon as the vaccine was introduced, Szarewski called for it to be given to boys as well as girls, telling one interviewer that it was unfair that the responsibility for protecting oneself against the sexually transmitted virus should lay with women only.² She also believed that the vaccine should be made available to older women and had begun to initiate some trials in this area.

For her PhD she looked at the effects of smoking cessation on precancer in the cervix.³ Smoking cessation experts were amazed at her success in persuading her patients to give up tobacco, says Peter Sasieni, professor of cancer epidemiology and statistics, and a colleague of Szarewski's for more than 20 years at the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine.

Practical research was her hallmark. She undertook studies where women took samples from their own cervix using a swab and showed that the results were nearly as accurate as tests undertaken on a clinical sample. In her early career she studied five different cervical screening devices. Her research was driven by a desire to ensure that as many women as possible could be protected from cervical cancer, says Louise Cadman, a research nurse who worked with Szarewski on many of her trials. "She was motivated by a desire to benefit women and those who were overlooked. In recent years we have published research on women who have been sexually abused in



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childhood, and on women from different ethnic groups," she says.

Szarewski was born in London, the only daughter of older Polish parents. Her father, who fled the Nazis, died when she was still at medical school. She went to Streatham and Clapham Hill High School for Girls, and then studied medicine at London's Middlesex Hospital, graduating in 1982. She worked at various hospitals in London before going to the Whittington, where she worked for Albert Singer, now emeritus professor of gynaecology at University College London.

Singer advised Szarewski to follow a career in academia rather than in the "hurly burly" of the male dominated specialty of obstetrics and gynaecology. He then recommended her for a job at the Wolfson Institute, where she remained for the rest of her career.

Family planning was another interest, and she worked as a doctor in contraception and sexual health at the Margaret Pyke Centre in London for many years. She wrote several books on contraception and the pill, and from 2003 was editor of the *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*. Under her editorship the journal broadened its scope. It included book and film reviews, and

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● Research: Long term predictive values of cytology and human papillomavirus testing in cervical cancer screening (*BMJ* 2008;337:a1754)

Szarewski commissioned non-medical writers, such as psychologist Susan Quilliam.

She felt that communication was an important part of her role as a researcher and was angry about the 1995 pill scare, when the Committee on Safety of Medicines wrote to every GP in the country warning them of the risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE) among women taking the third generation oral contraceptive pill.⁴ The media were told about the risk before many GPs, and the rate of abortions rose by 9% as a result. One of the problems with the communication was lack of clarity about relative risk versus absolute risk. "It was the relative risk that was hitting the headlines," says Sasieni. "Anne thought more women got VTE as a result of unwanted pregnancy than got it due to the pill," he says.

She was adept at explaining complex science to a lay audience, says Sasieni. "She pretended she couldn't cope with maths and statistics, and she said that she was better at explaining statistical concepts to a lay audience than someone who found it really easy," he says.

She also enjoyed speaking to the media and was used regularly as a spokesperson by the Cancer Research UK press office. When Alma Sedgewick, a character on *Coronation Street*, died from cervical cancer it caused a spike in interest in the disease and Szarewski was happy to talk to journalists.

She married South African journalist Lester Venter when she was in her 40s, and loved theatre, classical music, and art exhibitions. She was also a voracious reader. She was a popular colleague who was known as the cake lady for the treats she would bring in to the office. She also had a good sense of humour, christening her research team "team cervix."

She leaves her husband.

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References are in the version on bmj.com.

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Charles Henry de Boer



Consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Liverpool Women's and Maternity Hospitals, St Helens and Warrington (b 1921; q Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 1945; FRCS, MRCOG), d 15 June 2013.

Charles de Boer was appointed consultant in Liverpool in 1955. He taught with stories, analogies and, above all, by example. His lectures were illustrated by his own drawings, his homemade slides, and using himself or trainees. He married Joyce van Gelder in 1952. He retired in 1986, and the couple moved to Staffordshire. Joyce's health deteriorated with the development of dementia, and Charles cared for her as long as he was able to do so. They moved to Warwickshire to be close to their son once prostate cancer was diagnosed, which, despite treatment, contributed to his death at the age of 91. Charles was survived by Joyce for only three months. They leave four children; 15 grandchildren; and one great grandson.

Frances de Boer, Richard de Boer
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Michael Frank Butler



Former consultant general surgeon Isle of Thanet District Hospital, Margate (b 1921; q St Mary's Hospital, London, 1945; FRCS Eng), died from ischaemic heart disease on 16 August 2013.

Michael Frank Butler undertook his surgical training in Southampton, Bournemouth, and Sheffield. He was appointed registrar to the

Westminster group of hospitals in 1952 and senior registrar in 1956. He was appointed consultant general surgeon to the Isle of Thanet District Hospital in 1960 and served there until he retired in 1989. He could turn his hand to most operations and over the years mastered the techniques in the then developing discipline of vascular surgery. An accomplished pianist and choral singer, he also enjoyed dinghy sailing and snow skiing. He leaves Marjorie, his wife of 66 years; two sons; four grandsons; three granddaughters; and two great granddaughters.

C M Butler, N S Butler
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Ian Trevor Field



Medical administrator (b 1933; q Guy's Hospital Medical School, London, 1961; CBE, MRCS, FFPHM RCP (UK), FFOM RCP Lond), died from metastatic colon cancer on 23 December 2012.

As secretary general of the World Medical Association (WMA) in the mid-1990s Ian Trevor Field was a leading voice on many issues and became influential internationally. He chaired the World Health Organization's global advisory committee on malaria control in 1981. As secretary of the BMA in the early 1990s he met the then prime minister, John Major, on numerous occasions to discuss NHS finances and reforms. He became senior medical officer at the Department of Health and Social Security in 1975; one of his primary roles was as chief medical and health services adviser to the Overseas Development Administration. He returned to the BMA in 1985 and was also involved with the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries. Throughout his life he was guided by a strong Christian faith. He leaves his wife of 52 years, Christine; three sons; and eight grandchildren.

Giles Field
Cite this as: [BMJ 2013;347:f5981](#)

Ken Owen



Former consultant urologist St Mary's Hospital, London (b 1920; q 1944; FRCS), died from complications of abdominal surgery for ischaemic small bowel on 7 June 2013.

As a consultant surgeon at St Mary's and the Royal Northern hospitals, and with a private practice, Ken Owen worked long hours. He developed urology and renal transplants at St Mary's (retaining an interest in vascular, parathyroid, and adrenal surgery) and mentored the next generation of urologists. He was a skilled and meticulous surgeon and an enthusiast of learning from colleagues, and he was referred many patients from overseas. Later he became a respected expert witness and worked on medical tribunals. Outside medicine his activities included dairy and sheep farming, riding, foreign languages (completing a German degree in his 80s), gardening, listening to opera and classical music, and baking bread. He leaves a wife, Barbara; three children; and eight grandchildren.

Tim Owen
Cite this as: [BMJ 2013;347:f5944](#)

Ian Peacock



Former consultant physician and diabetologist, Derbyshire Royal Infirmary (b 1950; q Cambridge/London Hospital 1974; MA, MD, FRCP, LLM), d 20 June 2013.

Ian Peacock was appointed to the consultant staff of the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary in 1986, when the diabetes service in Derby was in

need of development. He established diabetes care in the community, in association with GPs, with support from nurse practitioners. He contributed to all aspects of diabetes care in Derby and was particularly aware of the psychological problems in younger diabetes patients. He obtained support from Chris Gillespie, a consultant clinical psychologist, who subsequently became a close personal friend. When Ian retired prematurely on medical grounds in 2001, he developed an interest in medicolegal work and studied medical law. He died suddenly. He had previously been married to Judy and leaves three children.

Michael Millar-Craig
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Donald Winstock



Consultant oral and maxillofacial surgeon Middlesex and St Bartholomew's hospitals (b 1924; q St Bartholomew's 1953; FDS, FRCS), died after an operation on 1 June 2013.

Donald Winstock was brought up in east London in a family of immigrant Russian Jews. He had terrible mastoiditis and did not know his alphabet until he was 11 years old. He trained in dentistry before doing medicine and becoming consultant oral and maxillofacial surgeon at four London teaching hospitals. He published widely on the surgical management of patients with haemophilia and had a passion for teaching. Happiest when seeing patients or sharing surgical skills on visits to warmer climates, he won the Cartwright prize in 1966 and was awarded a Hunterian professorship in 1981. He loved the theatre, his book club, and lying in the sun. He leaves his wife, Tess; three children; and five grandchildren.

Adam R Winstock
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