

The history of Anesthesiology in Belgium

DE HERT S.¹

¹*Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium.*

Corresponding author: Stefan De Hert, MD, PhD, FESAIC, Department of Basic and Applied Medical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ghent University, Corneel Heymanslaan 10, 9000 Ghent, Belgium. E-mail: stefan.dehert@ugent.be

Although the first anesthesia in Belgium was reported already in 1847, it was only after World War II, that the medical specialism of anaesthesiology was formally established and officially recognized in the country. Before, providing anesthesia was left to students, nurses or the most junior (surgery) trainees^{1,2}.

Testimonies of the first steps and the evolution of the specialism of anesthesia in Belgium remain scarce. There is the excellent master after master work of Dr. Lien Jakus available on Youtube, which gives a glimpse of this journey with testimonies of persons who were part of or were the first witnesses of this development³.

Last year two of the remaining academic direct witnesses of the starting years of the specialty of anesthesiology in Belgium, Prof. Dr Georges Rolly and Prof. Dr. Frédéric Camu passed away^{4,5}. At that time it became apparent that the history of the evolution of our specialty has never been systematically reported. So we considered it to be appropriate to collect – as much as possible – information and data about this history.

To get a balanced overview about this history, all Belgian university centers were asked to write the story of the start of anesthesia in their center. In this issue of the *Acta Anaesthesiologica Belgica* you will find contributions about the history of the BeSARPP, the APSAR, the journal *Acta Anaesthesiologica Belgica* and the start and development of the specialty of anesthesiology in the different academic centers with an overview on how individual centers have contributed to the development of anesthesia nationally, but also internationally.

We realize that this may only reflect a part of the story of anesthesia in Belgium and therefore we welcome additional contributions about hospitals or individuals who may have played a role in the history of anesthesia in Belgium.

References

1. De Turck B. The first ether anaesthesia in Belgium –The history of anaesthesia society proceedings 2012;45:66–72.
2. De Rood M. History of anaesthesia in Belgium. *Rev Med Brux* 2012;33:179–187.
3. https://www.google.com/search?q=geschiedenis+van+de+anesthesie+in+belgi%C3%AB+youtube&sc_esv=bb65bd8365f461f5&rlz=1C1GCEA_enBE1060BE1060&sxsrf=ANbLn7Mx65b6hjkhSsd4GaKhk
4. Vanhonacker D, Verborgh C, Banlersberghe C. In memoriam: Prof. Em. Dr. Frédéric Camu. *Acta Anaesthesiol Belg* 2025;76:1–2.
5. De Baerdemaeker L, Herregods L. In memoriam: Prof. Dr. Georges Rolly. *Acta Anaesthesiol Belg* 2025;76:3.

doi.org/10.56126/77.2.01