

50 (or 106?) years Sozial- und Präventivmedizin (Social and Preventive Medicine)

Prof. Ursula Ackermann-Liebrich is Academic Director of the Swiss School of Public Health, former Head of Department at the Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Basel, Member of SPM's Advisory Board and former Editor-in-Chief of SPM.

Our journal Sozial- und Präventivmedizin has a long history. Fifty (or 106?) have been covered so far, during which the name of the journal as well as the name of the society supporting the journal have changed several times. A brief overview of the preceding journals and its owners is given in table 1. In the following I would just like to comment on some of the major issues and historical developments which led to today's appearance of the journal.

In 1899, the Swiss Society for School Health was founded; its statutes explicitly mentioned the publication of a "year book". The first one appeared in 1900, the cover is shown in figure 1. Its content centered around hygiene and health promotion in children and adolescents, its target readership was mainly teachers and educational or school authorities.

In 1921 the society changed its name, its direction and its publication. The latter became "Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Gesundheitspflege" (Swiss Journal for Health Care), its cover included the name in French and Italian (Revue Suisse d'Hygiène, Rivista Svizzera d'Igiene) and the Society decided to expand to "all fields of hygiene".

Willy von Gonzenbach, (see portrait Fig. 2) became chief editor from 1921 on, the reorientation of the journal coincides with this change. The expansion to general problems of hygiene, to healthy living, nutrition, occupation and abatement of epidemics has to be seen in this context. Prof. Willy von Gonzenbach became chair of the Institute for Hygiene and Bacteriology at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, where he retired in 1950 but remained chief editor until his death in 1955. In 1929 the journal was renamed "Zeitschrift für Hygiene und Wohlfahrtspflege", in 1934 "Gesundheit und Wohlfahrt" (Health and Wellbeing). In his editorial, Willy von Gonzenbach commented on this latter development and wrote about "die Nöte unserer Zeit, Krisen, Armut und soziale Spannungen" (the suffering in our time, crises, poverty and social tensions) and "traditionschas-



Figure 1 Jahrbuch 1901

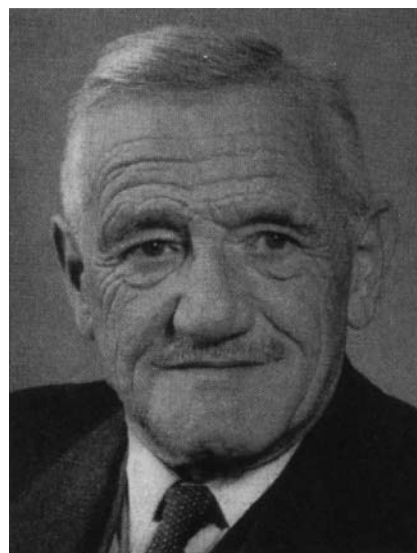


Figure 2 Willy von Gonzenbach

Table 1 Preceding journals and their respective owners, sponsors / editors, publishers, readership, the thematic orientation, and the origin of financial resources

Year / number of issues	Titel / Languages	Sponsorship / Editors	Printer / Publisher	Readership / Goal of the publication	Major themes	Financial resources
Phase 1:						
1900 – 1920						
1900 1 / year	Yearbook of the Swiss Society for school health (Schweiz. Gesellschaft f. Schulgesundheitspflege. Annales suisses d'Hygiène scolaire)	Swiss Society for school health (Schweiz. Gesellschaft f. Schulgesundheitspflege) Editor: F. Zollinger, Zurich	Zürcher & Furrer, Zurich	Mainly teachers, but also members of departments of school and health, hygienists, doctors, architects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Overview of laws and efforts conducted in the domain of hygiene at school in the cantons – Works concerning hygiene at school (construction, furniture) – Teaching of hygiene – Promotion of the wellbeing of children and adolescents, etc. 	Contributions of the members, subsidies from the authorities, income from the selling of the yearbook, donations, etc.
Phase 2:						
1921 – 1955						
"Broadening of the discipline"						
1921 4 / year	Swiss Journal of Hygiene (Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Gesundheitspflege / Revue suisse d'hygiène / Rivista svizzera d'igiene)	Swiss Society for Hygiene (Schweiz. Gesellschaft für Gesundheitspflege) Editor: W. von Gonzenbach, Director of the Institute for Hygiene and Bacteriology (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich)	Fretz & Brothers A.G., Zurich From 1925 on, H.A. Gutzwiller AG, Zurich	Facilitate and promote exchange of ideas between members of the society. The interest of other circles should be awakened.	Reviews, original research, reports, and reviews of journals or books (cf. yearbook) Annual report of the proceedings and activities of the local sections, or of related societies (for example, the Swiss Society against venereal diseases / Schweiz. Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten and others)	Mainly subscriptions of members (approx. 80%), subsidies from the Swiss authorities, advertisements
1927 6 / year	Swiss Journal of Hygiene and Archives of Social Welfare (Schweiz. Zeitschrift für Gesundheitspflege und Archiv für Sozialfürsorge / Revue suisse d'hygiène et Annales de l'assistance publique / Rivista svizzera d'igiene, Annali d'assistenza pubblica)	Swiss Society for Hygiene (Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Gesundheitspflege / Société suisse d'hygiène)	H.A. Gutzwiller AG, Zurich	Delivery in Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Whole domain of health-care and social welfare in Switzerland. – Reports on the activities of the Swiss Society for Hygiene and of its sections – Reports on developments of social hygiene abroad 	Mainly subscriptions of the members (approx. 80%), subsidies from the Swiss authorities, advertisements
1929 12 / year	Swiss Journal of Hygiene and Archives of Welfare (Schweiz. Zeitschrift für Hygiene und Archiv für Wohlfahrtspflege / Revue suisse d'hygiène et Annales de l'assistance publique / Rivista svizzera d'igiene Annali d'assistenza pubblica)	Swiss Society for Hygiene (Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Gesundheitspflege / Société suisse d'hygiène)	H.A. Gutzwiller AG, Zurich	Call to departments of education and Social welfare, medical associations	Majority of articles on different domains of public health, which are presented in scientific and more popular forms	Mainly subscriptions of members (approx. 80%), subsidies from the Swiss authorities, advertisements. No similar journal available in Switzerland or abroad at such a low price

Year / number of issues	Titel / Languages	Sponsorship / Editors	Printer / Publisher	Readership / Goal of the publication	Major themes	Financial resources
1934 12 / year	Health and Welfare (Gesundheit und Wohlfahrt / Revue Suisse d'Hygiène)		Orell Füssli, Zurich (Gutzwiller had gone bankrupt in 1932)	Physicians, teachers, and authorities Delivery in Germany no longer mentioned.		Subscriptions of members, subsidies from the Swiss authorities, advertisements Reduction of volumes due to cut of subsidies
Phase 3:						
"Scientification" 1956 – 1973						
1956/ 12 / year	Journal of Preventive Medicine (Zeitschrift für Präventivmedizin / Revue de Médecine préventive)	Swiss Society for Preventive Medicine (Schweizerische Gesellschaft f. Präventivmedizin) Change in chief-editor. Second editor and editorial board for the French speaking part of Switzerland		Official body of the Swiss Society for School Health, of the Group for the study of health protection in the industry and trade, and of the Swiss National Committee for mental hygiene (Gesellschaft Schweizer Schulärzte, Studiengruppe f. Gesundheitsschutz in Industrie und Gewerbe, Schweiz. National-Komitee f. Geistige Hygiene)	– Original articles and reviews on the whole field of preventive medicine: problems of traffic and hygiene in cities, health at the workplace, industrial hygiene, public health, hygiene in the army, epidemiology, school hygiene, nutrition, mental hygiene, prevention of chronic diseases (cancer, tuberculosis, arthritis), insurance, social medicine, rehabilitation of disabled persons, gerontology and biostatistics.	Subscriptions of the members, advertisements
Phase 4:						
"Specialization" 1974 –						
1974 6 / year	Journal of Social and Preventive Medicine (Zeitschrift für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin / Revue de la Société suisse de médecine sociale et préventive)	Society for Social and Preventive Medicine (Schweiz. Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin) (integration of the two societies Sept. 23rd, 1972)	Orell Füssli, Zurich From 1977 on: Vogt Schild, Solothurn	Scientists and practitioners in the field of social and preventive medicine	Very large spectrum, sometimes thematic issues ("Scientific reports" once a year)	– subscriptions – advertisements
1988 6 / year	Journal of Social and Preventive Medicine (Zeitschrift für Sozial- und Präventivmedizin / Revue de la Société suisse de médecine sociale et préventive)	Common editing: Swiss Society for Social and Preventive Medicine & German Society for Social Medicine and Prevention (Deutsche Gesellschaft f. Sozialmedizin und Prävention)		Original research/peer reviews cited in Medline. International orientation.		– Society – subscriptions – advertisements – partnerships
1991 6 / year	Social and Preventive Medicine / Sozial- und Präventivmedizin / Médecine sociale et préventive	Common editing: Swiss Society for Social and Preventive Medicine & German Society for Medical Sociology (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Medizinische Soziologie)	From 1991 on: Birkhäuser Verlag AG, Basel	Broadening towards international orientation		– Society – subscriptions – advertisements – partnerships

Remark: Before 1900 it is unclear who was the publisher of the "Schweiz. Blätter f. Gesundheitspflege". Two books containing handwritten protocols of the editorial committee are stored in the Medical Historical Archives in Zurich, under the following signature: "W52 KaeG 14.1/14.2".

Table by Y. Eckert / historian

sende neue Strömungen “(tradition-hating new trends)”. In view of all these facts, hygiene should receive the broad name it deserves: “Health and Well-being” (Bättig, 1969). As early as in 1921 von Gonzenbach referred to the importance of health statistics and wrote “we have enough literature – now we need to transform it into organized action”. As a curiosity we show the front page of the Journal from 1927, when H. A. Gutzwiller at the Stampfenbachstrasse in Zurich became the publisher, just a few houses away from where the Swiss School of Public Health has now its offices (Fig. 3). In 1956 the journal was renamed “Zeitschrift für Präventivmedizin”, its first issue was labeled “Volume 1” and this is why we now celebrate the 50th anniversary of this journal. Etienne Grandjean from the Institute for Hygiene and Occupational Physiology at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (IHAP) became president of the editorial board and Dr. R. Egli responsible editor. The editorial commission was composed of members from the universities of Bern, Zurich, Lausanne, the director of the Federal Office of Public Health and the Cantonal Physician of Ticino. The society got a new name as well – it became the “Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Präventivmedizin”. The journal was planned to appear 12 times per year. From 1960 to 1974, Prof. Bättig edited the journal (see table 2). In its new concept after 1956 (title page see Fig. 4) the journal aimed at publishing a wide range of original research papers and reviews, subjects related to preventive medicine or as we would say today health protection and promotion. It included problems of indoor environment, hygiene and traffic, occupational medicine, industrial hygiene, public health, military hygiene, epidemiology, school health, nutrition, psychohygiene and the prevention of cancer, rheumatism, tuberculosis. The editors at that time wanted to “eliminate” what they considered the “old mistakes”, namely “to be not enough scientific for a medical profession and not popular enough to influence the health of the population”. Between 1965 and 1985 the abstracts or the full text of the presentations of the scientific conferences of the Society were printed in the journal. Special supplements were also introduced. During its whole existence, the support of the journal has been closely linked to academic development of its respective disciplines; at the beginning it was supported by the Swiss Society for School Hygiene, followed (from 1921 to 1973) by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and specifically from the Institute for Hygiene and Bacteriology, later the Institute for Occupational Hygiene and Physiology. In 1964 the Federal Government introduced “Social and Preventive Medicine” as a compulsory part of the final examination in medical studies and in 1968 the first examina-

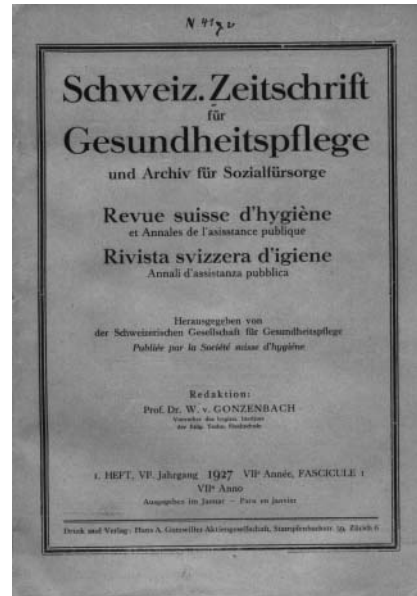


Figure 3
Gesundheitspflege
1927



Figure 4 Title page
1956

tions took place. In this context, the Universities of Zurich, Lausanne and Geneva founded their Institutes for Social and Preventive Medicine; in Basel the head of the School Health Service, Prof. G. Ritzel became responsible for teaching this subject in medical faculty and Bern gave a mandate to Prof. Schär from Zurich. In April 1972 Prof. Abelin was named director of the Institute in Bern and in 1973 editor of the “new journal”. At this same time the Swiss Society for Social Medicine and the Swiss Society for Preventive Medicine were integrated into one society called “Sozial- und Präventivmedizin” and the journal got the same name. Knowing Theodor Abelin it is not surprising, that the first

issue of the new journal was dedicated to the fight against tobacco abuse in Switzerland. The list in table 2 shows the different editors.

As early as in 1921 von Gonzenbach included a French speaking coeditor and this tradition was continued first with Olivier Jeanneret and later on with Jean Martin. Jean Martin remained French speaking editor until 1987. In 1981 Fred Epstein became editor (with the writer acting as an “editorial secretary”). In 1985 I took over the main responsibility jointly with Fred Epstein and Jean Martin. Between 1988 and 1994 Fred Paccaud (head of the Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine in Lausanne) edited the journal, in 1994 Robert Steffen from the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine in Zurich became editor. Since 2000 the editorial tasks are in the hand of Thomas Abel (Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine in Bern where the editorial office is hosted) and Alfredo Morabia (University Hospitals of Geneva) who the chief editors’ responsibilities. Thus since 1973 the main task of the editorship is hosted by the Institutes of Social and Preventive Medicine.

What can we learn from history? The first point to be learned is that the journal always was owned by a society and that it always had to fight for survival not because of its content but for financial reasons. The chief editors continuously had to make enormous efforts to keep the journal going, specially to keep money flowing. And since 1901 the minutes of the annual general assemblies of the supporting societies contain the discussion which everyone in the present society remembers – is it worth spending such a high proportion of the society’s budget on the journal? Yet, there are few journals which have survived for such a long time. The journal has had several phases in which it has expanded or has tried to expand; it has tried to become international, it has become international. However it has kept its place mainly in Switzerland, it has remained a multilingual journal, it has remained a journal engaged in protecting, promoting and improving population’s health.

Table 2 Chief Editors

1900 – 1921	Dr. phil. F. Zollinger, secretary, department of education, canton Zurich (Sekretär des Erziehungswesens des Kt. Zürich)
1921 – 1955	Prof. W. v. Gonzenbach, director Institute for hygiene und bacteriology Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich
1956 – 1960	Dr. R. Egli, Institute for hygiene and occupational physiology (IHAP) ETH Zurich Prof. E. Grandjean (Director IHAP) President Editorial Board
1960 – 1972	Dr. K. Bättig, IHAP, ETH Zurich
1972 – 1981	Prof. Th. Abel, ISPM, Bern, Prof. O. Jeanneret, IMSP, Geneva
1981 – 1985	Prof. F. Epstein, ISPM, Zürich, Dr. R. Bruppacher ISPM Basel, Dr. Jean Martin, Lausanne
1985 – 1988	PD Dr. med. U. Ackermann-Liebrich, Basel, Prof. F. Epstein, Dr. Jean Martin
1989 – 1994	Prof. Dr. med. Fred Paccaud, IMSP, Lausanne
1994 – 2000	Prof. Dr. med. Robert Steffen, ISPM, Zürich
since 2000	Prof. Dr. Th. Abel, ISPM, Bern und Prof. Dr. med. A. Morabia, HU, Genf.

Abbreviations:

ETH = Federal Institute of Technology /Zurich

IHAP = Institute for Hygiene and Occupational Physiology

ISPM, IMSP= Institute for Social-and Preventive Medicine

Major changes are occurring now: the change into an electronic journal, the change into a more international journal, the change in the understanding what a journal should and could do. Yet, the problems remain the same. History can teach us that survival is a continuous struggle. After 50 years Sozial- und Präventivmedizin, 106 years journal for social medicine, for public health, for wellbeing, for school health I hope that this journal will continue to exist, and that all those engaged in Public Health in Switzerland will support the ideas of this journal by subscribing to it, by reading it, by contributing to it, by helping to review papers for it and by taking on the tasks of editors or of the editorial board.

Ursula Ackermann-Liebrich

References

Bättig K (1969). Zeitschrift für Präventivmedizin in neuer Aufmachung, Editorial, Zeitschrift für Präventivmedizin 14: 1–5.

Address for correspondence

Prof. Dr. med. Ursula Ackermann-Liebrich
Academic Director
Swiss School of Public Health+
Stampfenbachstr. 63
CH 8006 Zürich/Suisse
e-mail: ursula.ackermann-liebrich@unibas.ch