

In Memoriam

Tribute to Michael Stephen Harbuz (1959–2006)



Michael Harbuz at the Dali Museum in 2002. (This photograph is reproduced with permission from *Stress* Vol. 9, Issue 2, in press, 2006.)

Mick Harbuz, who died in March two days after his 47th birthday from a cerebral infarction four days following a stroke, was a long-standing and well-loved member of the PNIRS. Mick completed his PhD at the University of Reading in 1987 and then joined Stafford Lightman's burgeoning neuroendocrinology group at Westminster Hospital in London which moved to the University of Bristol in 1993. Mick rapidly established himself as a stress physiologist with an international reputation in the area of hypothalamo–pituitary–adrenal activity. He was a superb animal surgeon and the speed and efficiency with which he could implant central or peripheral indwelling cannulae into rats always astonished those who worked with him. Low basal blood ACTH and corticosterone concentrations following his

surgery and handling were testament to his gentle skills and technical brilliance in whole animal physiology.

Mick was first and foremost a friend but we also formed a very strong and successful scientific team. Mick was an excellent experimentalist with an attention for detail and a rigorous analytical approach to data, which is the mark of the true scientist. He was a fine ambassador for PNI and was a founder committee member (and current chair) of the Brain-Immune Network Group (BING) in 1995. He regularly presented work at PNIRS meetings and he organised a very successful PNIRS meeting in Bristol in 1998, the first to be held outside of the USA. He published well over 100 peer-reviewed research papers as well as dozens of invited chapters and review articles.

Mick's interests outside his work were many and varied. He took great delight in tending his garden, he took the study of traditional English beer seriously, and he was a keen and knowledgeable collector of fine English ceramics. He was a fervent supporter of the Bristol and England Rugby Union teams and we were planning a trip to the Rugby World Cup in France next year. As an expert in stress and PNI, Mick well understood the need for a healthy balance between work and play, and he managed his large workload in a calm and efficient manner before switching off and relaxing in the evenings and weekends.

Mick was promoted to Reader (one position away from a full Professor) at the University of Bristol in

2005 on the basis of the international quality of his research, and in the same year appointed Post-graduate Director of Education for the Faculty of Medicine; it was apparent that Mick's career was on a high. The greatest sadness is that he died when, having achieved so much in his teaching and research, there was still so much of quality to come. Our thoughts are with his wife, Wendy, in this time of sadness.

David Jessop

Received 19 April 2006; accepted 20 April 2006