

Ari Haukkala – great colleague and friend

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Dr Ari Haukkala's significant scientific and professional career is related to health and social psychology, and public health science. Ari had several important institutional affiliations during his career. The first, National Public Health Institute (KTL) gave impetus to his career. Being already at KTL I realized that Ari would be the right person to analyse psychosocial aspects of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) in the Institute's 1992 FINRISK data. Ari took up the challenge and followed me to KTL where he started to process his dissertation.

FINRISK studies at KTL sprang from results of the North Karelia project (1972-1977). FINRISK studies were aimed at monitoring and evaluating national programmes to promote public health by controlling the use of saturated fats and smoking. Ari started to examine cynical distrust and depressive symptoms, novel factors in the FINRISK study, but well-established in health psychology, as potential determinants of disease progress. To get informed we, Ari (photo) and I, participated in the 1995 EHPS Congress in Bergen. Ari's doctoral work initiated a process which subsequently led to his significant contributions to the study of psychosocial factors for CVD, and in smoking prevention. As an open, joyful and easy-to-work-with person Ari soon made friends with a number of peers and colleagues who realized his great capabilities and encouraged him to widen his interests further. At KTL Ari made contacts with researchers in genetic testing of mutations causing the heritable Lynch cancer syndrome. At that time,

Ari also started to supervise dissertations. That was opening a path to his ensuing successful training of new generations of researchers.

After an important post-doc year in Harvard, Ari worked at KTL in the evaluation of smoking prevention programmes and studies on the role of psychosocial factors in prediction of obesity and metabolic syndrome. In this period, and later on, Ari was based at the University of Helsinki and gave his highest contribution to science and researcher training.

Ari was my first real doctoral student at KTL in the early 1990's. Being first may not have been a major challenge since we both were able to learn from each other both in terms of dissertation content and how to process it. Ari was determined to learn and work. He became also an important person amongst the KTL doctoral students when they discussed scientific problems and how to cope with stress obviously encountered.

Ari was a master in creating opportunities for stress reduction, including office parties. As editors and referees often set very high norms for the acceptance of manuscripts, resulting author stress needs soothing. I have a vivid image of KTL Christmas parties where Ari and soon others too, sang and danced to music where the lyrics praised leaving the stressful city life (read science) behind to find peace in less demanding countryside settings in fact in North Karelia (sic)!

Ari was a great scientist and professional. He was also much more, and to me he still is: a valuable and unfailing friend giving support when it was needed. A great guy! It makes me sad that he is no longer with us.



Ari at the EHPS conference in Bergen, 1995

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