Neurocirugia. 2017;28(Espec Congr):40

Neurocirugía

https://www.revistaneurocirugia.com

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY, AN OVERVIEW OF HIS LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

M. Powell

Consultant Neurosurgeon, National Hospital, Queen Square, London, United Kingdom.

Resumen

Victor Horsley was appointed to carry out `brain surgery' at the National Hospital in Queen Square in London in 1885, following reports from Glasgow where a surgeon, Macewan, had been doing mainly brain abscess work, and also following a single brain operation in London in 1884. The appointment created the specialty of neurosurgery.

Horsley was just 28 when he took up the post a few months later. He had been in Paris confirming Pasteur's work on rabies for the British Government in the interim. Already a noted scientist, holding the position of Professor Superintendent at the Brown Institute, the University of London's animal research laboratory, he was shortly to receive the UK's highest scientific award, Fellowship of the Royal Society.

Horsley had showed that the thyroid gland's removal would mimic the condition of myxoedema, and that transplanting the gland back would restore the animal's health. He also was a noted neuro anatomist and physiologist working with neurologists from Queen Square and his teaching hospital, University College Hospital, where he held a junior staff post both as a surgeon and a pathologist.

Horsley continued as a research scientist throughout his life, along with his work as a neurosurgeon at Queen Square and as a `general' surgeon at UCH.

As a neurosurgeon, he was to create many firsts – epilepsy surgery, spinal tumour surgery and pituitary surgery, along with the management of sub arachnoid haemorrhage and trigeminal neuralgia. His signal achievement was the creation of stereotaxy, although he only ever used it on monkeys.

He was a controversial figure in Britain. He supported many national liberal causes, particularly women's suffrage which made him unelectable when he stood to become a Member of the British Parliament. He did, however, achieve reform of a number of British Medical Institutions.

He was the son of a prominent Victorian painter attached to Queen Victoria's court, and was named by the Queen, as he had shared his birthday with her last child, Princess Beatrice, who was to marry into the Spanish Royalty.

Horsley died in Iraq aged 59 during WWI as an officer in the British Medical Corps. He left over 600 papers and books and was a major influence in the development of the specialty of neurosurgery.

See front matter © 2017 Elsevier España, S.L. Todos los derechos reservados