

Although my father was a much liked family doctor and gynecologist/obstetrician, and an uncle living nearby a highly appreciated biomedical scientist and academic teacher, my ambition was to not follow in their footsteps but to develop my own career. As a school child, my interest in prevention and public health was raised by a school doctor – a pioneer in his field – who came to our school regularly to examine us and give us advice on healthy living. Later, as a medical student and part-time boy-scout leader I was particularly interested in what happens when young healthy people are overstrained physically, and my doctoral thesis reflects this interest:

Abelin, Th., Scherrer, M.: Ventilation und Säurebasenhaushalt des Gesunden bei schwerer Arbeit. Dissertation, Bern. Schweiz. med. Wschr. 90: 369, 1960.

My first position after graduating from Medical School was as a Research Fellow at the Institute of Hygiene and Occupational Physiology at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, under Professor Etienne Grandjean, who had spent some time at the Harvard University School of Public Health previously, and at the end of my time with him recommended that I attend this same School's MPH program.

Two topics determined my time in Zurich: The first was based on health complaints brought to our attention by the association of members of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and led on one hand to tests comparing the level of fatigue before and after Opera performances, and on the other structured interviews with about a hundred musicians, showing that their problem was not physical illness or fatigue but mental stress due to being forced to work in authoritarian structures and at times under highly autocratic conductors. The results were published in 1962 and led to a strike of the musicians against one of the leading conductors of the time, and later to organizational changes toward a more participatory system. This experience opened my eyes to the psycho-social dimension of health.

Abelin, Th., Reymond, M.C., Grandjean, E.: Untersuchungen über die berufliche Beanspruchung von Orchestermusikern. Z. Präv. med. 7: 267, 1962.

Tobacco Epidemiology and Control

As a second topic I was assigned the task of reviewing the then existing scientific literature on the connection between smoking and lung cancer. In spite of arguments against it voiced by some authors, after reading over 80 publications, my conclusion was that a causal relationship was beyond any reasonable doubt. This literature review introduced me to the logic of the epidemiological research method and acquainted me with the state of research in this field prior to publication of the US Surgeon General's Report of 1964.

Abelin, Th.: Rauchen als Ursache von Lungenkrebs. Stützen und Lücken der Beweisführung. Z. Präv. med. 6: 349, 1961.

In 1962 began my time at the Harvard School of Public Health, which was to continue until 1971. In the MPH course my accent was on Epidemiology, and when I was invited to join the Department of Epidemiology following graduation in 1963, I first continued working in

the field of tobacco and cancer, whereby my particular interest was in making study results more understandable to the public. In this case this was by transforming published results of epidemiological cohort studies on smoking and mortality from relative risks into loss of life expectancy.

Abelin, Th.: Application of Life Table Methods to Results of Epidemiologic Follow-Up Studies on Smoking and Mortality. Amer. J. Epid. 81: 254, 1965.

Similarly, I used a part-time position at the Massachusetts Tumor Registry to examine whether smoking habits predicted the survival time of lung cancer patients – an expectation, which we could not confirm.

Abelin, Th.: Smoking Habits and Survival of Lung Cancer Patients. Application of Temporary Expectation of Life as a Measure of Survival. Amer. J. Epid. 84: 110, 1966.

In analogy with the known association between maternal age at birth and leukemia (and Down Syndrome) I developed the hypothesis that maternal age at birth could be a factor in lung cancer as well – in particular among light or non-smokers. In an analysis of data available from a study done elsewhere, I tested this hypothesis and found the expected association:

Abelin, Th., Tokuhata, G.K.: Maternal Age at Birth and Susceptibility to Lung Cancer. Lancet 2: 1121, 1965.

As cigar and pipe smoking was rather widespread in Switzerland, and cigarette smokers were often advised to switch to these products as a means of reducing lung cancer risk, I used Swiss data to study whether these products were also related to lung cancer. Based on data from a cohort study of Swiss physicians started in the 1950s, we were able to confirm this relationship.

Abelin, Th., Gsell, O.R.: Relative Risk of Pulmonary Cancer in Cigar and Pipe Smokers. Cancer 20: 1288, 1967.

Gsell, O.R., Abelin, Th.: Cigar and Pipe Smoking in Relation to Lung Cancer and Excess Mortality. J. Nat. Cancer Inst. 48: 1975, 1972.

Gsell, O., Abelin, Th., Wieltschnig, E.: Rauchen und Mortalität der Schweizer Aerzte: Resultate nach 18jähriger Beobachtung. Bull. Schweiz. Akad. Med. Wiss. 35: 71, 1979.

In the course of time, our study of the tobacco problem shifted to other aspects. I was able to join a colleague at the Department of Epidemiology for a follow-up of Newton (Massachusetts) high school students previously studied for their smoking habits, and this resulted in the first longitudinal study on beginning to smoke:

Salber, E.J. and Abelin, Th.: Smoking Behavior of Newton School Children - Five-Year Follow-Up. Pediatrics 40: 363, 1967.

Also with Eva Salber and jointly with an experienced psychoanalyst, we used our contact with the Newton High School to organize for its teachers one of the first documented

smoking cessation groups. It showed that a psychoanalytic approach was not suited for this purpose and opened the way to the more appropriate approaches of behavioural psychology.

Salber, E.J., Abelin, Th.: An Anti-Smoking Program for Teachers. In: National Interagency Council on Smoking and Health, World Conference on Smoking and Health. A Summary of the Proceedings: 228. American Cancer Society, New York, 1968.

Finally, as a much later contribution to smoking cessation research, I was able to direct the first field trial of transdermal nicotine patches in smoking cessation:

Abelin, Th., Bühler, A., Müller, P., Vesanen, K., Imhof, P.R.: Controlled trial of transdermal nicotine patch in tobacco withdrawal. The Lancet 8628: 7-10, 1989.

Abelin, Th., Ehrensam, R., Imhof, P., Müller, P., Howald, H.: Clinical experience with a transdermal nicotine system in healthy nicotine-dependent smokers. In: Wilhelmssen, L. (ed.): Smoking as a cardiovascular risk factor - new strategies for smoking cessation. Lewiston: Hogrefe & Huber Publ., pp. 35-46, 1991.

My subsequent work on tobacco control was less innovative, being devoted mainly to strengthening tobacco control action internationally and in my own country.

Epidemiology of Schizophrenia

Starting in 1965, as a staff member at the Harvard School of Public Health, I received major research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to study the epidemiology of Schizophrenia with approaches that had been successful in studying the causes of non-communicable diseases. In a case-control study of over 600 newly diagnosed patients covering the entire Boston area and individually matched neighborhood controls, we completed over a thousand interviews and began to process these, when I received the call to develop a new Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of my home city. Of particular interest in the study was the distinction between what was then called reactive and process-type schizophrenia, and the purpose of my work was to identify epidemiologically distinctive sub-groups of patients that would lend themselves to biogenetic study, once the necessary laboratory techniques would be available. Several publications are devoted to this issue. While data analysis was still going on (as a side-line besides of my teaching and research work in Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Bern), the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM) was changed to such an extent that future use of the study could not be expected, and further work was discontinued.

Abelin, Th.: Etiological Implications of the Distinction Between Process and Reactive Schizophrenia: The Monogenic Hypothesis Involving Intermediateness. In: Genetic Factors in Schizophrenia, Kaplan, A.R. (ed.), C.C. Thomas, Springfield, 111, 1972.

Abelin, Th.: Essence and Measurement of Process and Reactive Schizophrenia. In: Genetic Factors in Schizophrenia, Kaplan, A.R. (ed.), Springfield, 111; C.C. Thomas, 1972.

Abelin, Th.: Intaktheit der Familie zukünftiger Schizophrener: erste Resultate einer epidemiologischen Fall-Kontrollgruppenuntersuchung. In: Aspekte der Sozialpsychiatrie und Psychohygiene, Battegay, R. et al, Verlag Hans Huber, Bern, Stuttgart, Wien, 1975.

Wild, C.M., Shapiro, L.N., Abelin, Th.: Communication patterns and role structure in families of male schizophrenics. Arch. Gen. Psychiatry 34: 58, 1977.

Health Promotion: Concepts and Measurement

In line with my appointment at Harvard during the 1960s as "Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Behavioral Sciences", my intention had always been to add to my department a section on the social aspects of health. In the early 1980s, I had the opportunity to create such a section, which under the direction of my colleague Horst Noack, devoted itself mainly to the newly developing field of Health Promotion. In this connection I was later asked by the Editors of the Oxford Textbook of Public Health to write a newly introduced chapter on Health Promotion for its 2nd edition.

Abelin, Th.: Health Promotion. In: Holland, W.W., Detels, R., Knox, G. (eds.): Oxford Textbook of Public Health. Second edition. Volume 3: Applications in Public Health. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 557-589, 1991.

At the World Congress of Epidemiology of 1981 in Edinburgh the International Epidemiological Association IEA and the WHO European Office decided to jointly work toward a book on „Measurement in Health Promotion and Protection“, and together with two colleagues I was invited as a main editor. The purpose was to present and promote the concept of measuring the impact of health programs.

Abelin, Th.: Positive Indicators in health promotion. Indicateurs positifs de la promotion et de la protection de la santé. World health statist. quart. 39: 353-364, 1986.

Abelin, Th., Brzezinski, Z.J., Carstairs, Vera D.L. (eds.): Measurement in Health Promotion and Protection. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1987.

Abelin, Th.: Approaches to health promotion and disease prevention. In: Abelin, Th., Brzezinski, Z.J., Carstairs, Vera D.L. (eds.), Measurement in Health Promotion and Protection. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1987.

Noack, H., Abelin, Th.: Conceptual and methodological aspects of measurement in health and health promotion. In: Abelin, Th., Brzezinski, Z.J., Carstairs, Vera D.L. (eds.), Measurement in Health Promotion and Protection. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1987.

Abelin, Th.: Getting health promotion off the ground in Switzerland. J. Publ. Health Policy 9: 284-285, 1988.

Abelin, Th.: From a risk approach to community health promotion. An experimental program in Cali, Colombia. Medicus mundi Schweiz Bulletin 53: 10-14, 1994.

Working Toward a National Health Statistics System

After my return to Switzerland in 1971 my principal concern was no longer epidemiological research, but rather to work toward modernizing prevention and public health in my country. In 1974 I was delegated to represent Switzerland at a WHO Conference on Vital and Health Statistics in Copenhagen. Based on my report I was asked to head a National ad hoc Commission on Vital and Health Statistics and to recommend steps toward developing a national health statistic system. However, due to political opposition by one of the partner organizations, the report was tabled. As a response, I invested much of the ending 1970s and the 1980s in demonstration projects in the areas of hospital patient statistics, ambulatory medical care statistics and an interview survey on disability and needs of the Aged. Given the accent on the demonstration aspect, publication was mostly in German.

Study of the Elderly

Abelin, Th.: Central Nervous System Function in a Sample Survey of Old People. In: Senile Dementia: Outlook for the Future. J. Wertheimer and M. Marois (eds.). Modern Aging Research. Vol. 5. Alan R. Liss, Inc. New York, 1984.

Abelin, Th., Schlettwein-Gsell, D.: Behinderungen und Bedürfnisse Betagter. Eine multifaktorielle epidemiologische Studie unter städtischen Bedingungen. Schweiz. med. Wschr. 116: 1524-1542, 1986.

Abelin, Th., Schlettwein-Gsell, D.: The family and the help needs of disabled elderly in two Swiss cities. Compr. Gerontol. Suppl. Issue A + B 3: 51 - 56, 1989.

Ambulatory Medical Care Survey

Abelin, Th.: Schweizerische Erhebung über die ambulante ärztliche Praxis. Schriftenreihe Arbeitsmedizin, Sozialmedizin, Präventivmedizin, Bd. 67, Gentner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1980.

Abelin, Th., Messerli, H.R.: Zahl, Dauer und Inhalt der Konsultationen in schweizerischen Arztpraxen. Soz. Präv. Med. 26: 88, 1981.

Abelin, Th., Messerli H.R.: Ueberweisungen in der ambulanten Medizin. Ergebnisse einer Studie über die ambulante ärztliche Versorgung in der Schweiz. Schweiz. Rundschau. Med. Praxis. 70: 1153, 1981.

Abelin, Th., Zahnd, R.: Die Berner Untersuchung über ambulante ärztliche Versorgung. Allgemeinmedizin International 2: 63-69, 1982.

Abelin, Th., Zahnd, R.: Der Stellenwert der Prävention in der ärztlichen Praxis. Soz. Präv. Med. 28: 112-117, 1983.

Abelin, Th.: Vorwort. In: Behandlungsverläufe in der ambulanten medizinischen Versorgung. Forschungsbericht Gesundheitsforschung Nr. 99, Borgers, D., Schröder, W.F. (Hrsg.), Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Berlin, 1984.

Statistics of Hospital Diagnoses

Spuhler, Th., Abelin, Th., Ehrenguber, H., Gass, R., Gutzwiller, F., Minder, Ch., Stutz, J., Adam, H.: Auswertung der VESKA-Diagnosen- und Operationsstatistik. Soz. Präz. Med. 27: 165-166, 1982.

Fahrni, U., Spuhler, Th., Abelin, Th., Ehrenguber, H.: Ergebnisse der Med. Statistik VESKA. Erster Teilbericht: Grundlagen und Fragestellungen. Schweizer Spital Nr. 47/5: 40-42, 1983.

Fahrni, U., Spuhler, Th., Abelin, Th., Ehrenguber, H., Patil S.: Ergebnisse der Med. Statistik VESKA. Vierter Teilbericht: Welches sind die häufigsten Diagnosen Chirurgischer Abteilungen im Jahr 1982? Schweizer Spital Nr. 47/11: 22-24, 1983.

Fahrni, U., Spuhler, Th., Abelin, Th., Ehrenguber, H., Patil, S.: Ergebnisse der Med. Statistik VESKA. Dritter Teilbericht: Welches sind die häufigsten Operationen im Jahr 1982?. Schweizer Spital Nr. 47/9: 35-37, 1983.

Fahrni, U., Spuhler, Th., Abelin, Th., Ehrenguber, H., Patil, S.: Ergebnisse der Med. Statistik VESKA. Fünfter Teilbericht: Die Zunahme der betagten Patienten im Spital. Schweizer Spital Nr. 48/2: 51-53, 1984.

Abelin, Th.: Utilisation des données hospitalières en santé publique. In: Paccaud, F., Schenker, L. (eds.): Adaption des DRG en Suisse. Perspectives d'utilisation. Aarau: ISH, 1989.

Environmental Epidemiology: Ionizing Radiation and Electromagnetic Fields

Following the Chernobyl nuclear accident of 1986, a highly emotional controversy on its health effects developed, and my impression was that only careful epidemiological analysis of high quality data could help to arrive at an impartial judgment. In 1990, a team of Swiss physicians returned from a fact-finding mission in the affected region and informed me of the existence of a national cancer registry for the Republic of Belarus, whose leading physicians were looking for collaboration with epidemiologists from Western Europe. As I had just decided to change my research focus from Tobacco and Health Statistics to Environmental Epidemiology and funds became available from the Swiss government in the framework of collaboration with the European Office of WHO, the basis was given for a ten-year project, which was mainly devoted to documentation of the Epidemiology of thyroid cancer in areas exposed to increased radiation.

Furmanchuk, A.W., Averkin, J.I., Egloff, B., Ruchti, C., Abelin, Th., Schäppi, W., Korotkevich, E.A.: Pathomorphological findings in thyroid cancers of children from the Republic of Belarus: A study of 86 cases occurring between 1986 ("post-Chernobyl") and 1991. Histopathology 21: 401-408, 1992.

Abelin, Th., Averkin, J.I., Egger, M., Egloff, B., Furmanchuk, A.W., Gurtner, F., Korotkevich, J.A., Marx, A., Matveyenko, I.I., Okeanov A.E., Ruchti, Ch., Schaeppi, W.: Thyroid cancer in Belarus post-Chernobyl: Improved detection or increased incidence? Soz. Präz.med. 39: 189-197, 1994.

Abelin, Th., Egger, M., Ruchti, Ch.: Belarus increase was probably caused by Chernobyl. (Letter) Brit. Med. J. 309: 1298, 1994.

Averkin JI, Abelin T, Bleuer JP. Thyroid cancer in children in Belarus: ascertainment bias? (Letter) Lancet 1995; 346: 1223-4.

Abelin T, Averkin JI, Okeanov AE, Bleuer JP. Thyroid cancer in Belarus: The epidemiological situation. In: Karaoglou A, Desmet G, Kelly GN et al., eds. The radiological consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Proceedings of the first international conference, Minsk, Belarus, 18-22 March, 1996. Brussels, Belgium: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1996: 727-30.

Bleuer JP, Averkin YI, Abelin T. Chernobyl-related thyroid cancer: what evidence for role of short-lived iodines? Environ Health Perspect 1997 Dec;105 Suppl 6:1483-6

Bleuer JP, Dubois G, Prudiyus IS, Maignan M, Averkin YI, Krivoruchko KA, Abelin T. Analysis of spatial correlation of radioactive Iodine deposition and thyroid cancer occurrence in Belarus post-Chernobyl. Health effects of low dose radiation, BNES, London 1997

Kofler A, Abelin T, Prudiyus IS, Averkin YI. Factors related to latency period in post-Chernobyl carcinogenesis In Thomas G, Karaoglou A, Williams ED, eds. Radiation and thyroid cancer. Proceedings of an international seminar on radiation and thyroid cancer, Cambridge, UK, 1998. World Scientific Publishing, 1998 123-130

At about the same time a controversy developed in Switzerland on possible health effects of a short-wave radio emission station near Bern, and we were commissioned to study whether an alleged accumulation of health complaints in the population living in the area could be attributed to the station. Although it was not possible to clearly distinguish between possible effects of electro-magnetic fields and psychological effects related to rumors about health effects, a clear-cut statistical association between exposure and sleep disorder could be documented. When the station was closed down – officially because short-wave radio had lost its significance in international communications, but in the mind of the population because of the documented sleep disorder – sleep quality in the population normalized.

Stärk KDC, Krebs Th, Altpeter ES, Manz B, Griot C, Abelin Th: Absence of chronic effect of exposure to short wave radio broadcast signal on salivary melatonin concentrations in dairy cattle. J Pineal Res 22: 171-176, 1997.

Abelin T, Altpeter E, Rösli M. Sleep disturbances in the vicinity of the short-wave broadcast transmitter Schwarzenburg. Somnologie 2005;9:203-209.

Altpeter ES, Rösli M, Battaglia M, Pfluger D, Minder CE, Abelin T. Effect of short-wave (6-22 MHz) magnetic fields on sleep quality and melatonin cycle in humans: the Schwarzenburg shut-down study. Bioelectromagnetics 2006;27(2):142-50.

Medical and Public Health Education

My writing was mostly unrelated to my teaching activities, but still, this interest is reflected in a few smaller publications. In a survey covering Medical Schools in most countries of Europe we demonstrated that teaching of Social Medicine was assigned a negligible number of hours in Western Europe, whereas in the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, it was given considerable weight and time.

Koch-Weser, D., Abelin, Th.: Der Unterricht der Sozialmedizin in verschiedenen Teilen Europas. In: Handbuch der Sozialmedizin. Bd. II, Hrsg: M. Blohmke, Ch. v. Ferber, K.P. Kisker und H. Schaefer, Enke, Stuttgart, 1977.

In my own Medical School I introduced a teaching exercise in what I called Clinical Social Medicine, where the students working on Internal Medicine wards had to complete a half-structured interview with a selected patient, write a report, and then, in the presence of a Hospital Social Worker and myself or a collaborator, had to discuss the patient in terms of social factors contributing to the clinical condition and special needs to be expected after hospital discharge. We continued this exercise until my retirement in 2000, but it remained an isolated initiative not recognized by my colleagues as belonging to our discipline.

Abelin, Th.: Das sozialmedizinische Gespräch im Rahmen der ärztlichen Ausbildung. Schweiz. Aerzte. 58: 1251, 1977.

Abelin, Th.: To what extent can primary care physicians be trained in specialized care settings?. In: Medical Education and Primary Health Care, H. Noack (ed.), Croom Helm, London, 1980.

Having served on the faculty of a large School of Public Health and returned to a country with (at that time) no corresponding course offerings, I was highly interested in promoting the teaching of Public Health worldwide.

Abelin, Th.: The World Need for Schools of Public Health. Communication. J. Publ. Hlth. Policy 4: 107-108, 1983.

Abelin, Th.: Zum Stand der Entwicklung eines interuniversitären Weiterbildungsangebots für öffentliche Gesundheit in der Schweiz. In: Laaser, U., Wolters, P.(Hrsg.): Forum Gesundheitswissenschaften. Bd.1/1991. Bielefeld: IDIS, pp. 66-72, 1991.

Abelin, Th: Research and teaching in social and preventive medicine and in public health. Soz. Präy.med. 38: 259-267, 1993.

Abelin, Th.: Editorial. Social and preventive medicine: A scientific approach to questions of practical relevance. Soz. Präy.med. 38: 257-258, 1993.

Contributions to Textbooks:

(Chapter on Health Promotion, Oxford Textbook of Public Health, 1991; see above)

3 Chapters in: Gutzwiller, F., Jeanneret O. (Hrsg.): Sozial- und Präventivmedizin Public Health. Bern: Huber, 1996.

Abelin, Theodor: Public Health aus globaler und europäischer Sicht: Die globale Perspektive. In: FW Schwartz, U. Walter, J. Sigrist, P. Kolik, R. Leidl, M.L. Dierks, R. Busse, N. Schneider (Hrsg.): Public Health. Gesundheit und Gesundheitswesen. Elsevier Urban & Fischer, München 2012. (1. – 3. edition)

Publications on the Organizational Development of Public Health:

From 1972 to 1980 I served as chief editor of „Sozial- und Präventivmedizin“, the scientific journal of the Swiss Society for Social and Preventive Medicine (later Swiss Society for Public Health), and I used it regularly for editorials and articles on possible improvements of the country's health and public health system. In 1976, when it was my turn to organize the Society's Annual Scientific Meeting, I used this event to introduce the notion of a systematic approach to health services and public health organization and devoted a special issue to its proceedings.

Abelin, Th., Bruppacher, R., Ritzel, C.: Grundsätzliches zu Problematik und Aufgabenbereich der Sozial-und Präventivmedizin. Schweiz. Aerztez. 54: 969-971, 1973.

Abelin, Th.: Sozialmedizin und Gesundheitswesen (Editorial). Soz. Präv. Med. 21: 173, 1976.

Abelin, Th.: Präventivmedizin, Selbstverantwortung und berufliche Verantwortung (Editorial). Soz. Präv. Med. 23: 231, 1978.

Abelin, Th.: Praktische Aspekte der Verwirklichung eines systematischen Vorgehens im Gesundheitswesen. Soz. Präv. Med. 23: 140, 1978.

Abelin, Th.: Systematisches Vorgehen im schweizerischen Gesundheitswesen (Editorial). Soz. Präv. Med. 23: 75, 1978.

Abelin, Th.: Infrastrukturprobleme der sozial- und präventivmedizinischen Forschung in der Schweiz (Editorial). Soz. Präv. Med. 24: 220, 1979.

Abelin, Th., Zehnder, E.: Beobachtungen und Gedanken zur medizinischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit - Ein Brief aus Kolumbien (Editorial). Soz. Präv. Med. 24: 110, 1979.

Abelin, Th.: Gesundheitsligen und präventive Oeffentlichkeitsarbeit (Editorial). Soz. Präv. Med. 25: 156, 1980.

Abelin, Th. (Editorial): Prävention, Gesundheitswesen und Wissenschaft. Soz. Präv. Med. 31: 190, 1986.

Abelin, Th. (Editorial): Ist die Schweiz. Gesellschaft für Sozial-und Präventivmedizin das, was sie sein sollte? - Einladung zur Diskussion. Soz. Präv. Med. 32: 277-279, 1987.

In the 1980s, during my Presidency of the Swiss Society for Social and Preventive Medicine, we were excited by successful population-oriented heart disease prevention projects in several countries of Europe. But as in our country, a serious governmental response was lacking, we took the initiative to mobilize national NGOs to finance, produce and emit our own series of TV spots with preventive health messages.

Frey, U., Abelin, Th.: Aktion Gesundheits-Kurzfilme der Schweiz. Ges. für Soz. und Präventivmed. 1985-86. Schlussbericht. Bern, 1987 (unpublished).

After 2000, as a member of the WFPHA leadership, I realized that initiatives similar to those I had promoted nationally were also needed at the global level.

"... A new sub-discipline of public health is needed, which should share a political, intersectoral approach with health promotion, but act on a global rather than on a local level. As in health promotion, global health should be largely based on non-governmental structures, as governments are too often slow to react to problems, and tend to overestimate the benefits of economic growth, while ignoring its less visible risks."

From:

Abelin T. Global public health: a challenge for the 21st century. Soz.-Präventivmed. 2000; 46/2:71-72.

Related articles:

Th. Abelin: Public Health – Die neue internationale Dimension. Forum Public Health 2002; 10/36: 3.

Abelin T. Legal measures in support of prevention in Switzerland. J Public Health Policy 2006; 27(4):355-65

Abelin T. The WFPHA and Tobacco Control. J Public Health Policy 2006; 27(4):445-447.