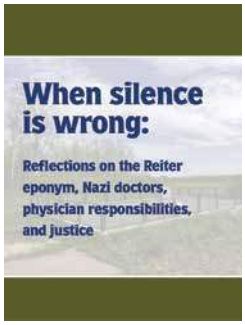
Letter to the Editor



In response to: When silence is wrong: Reflections on the Reiter eponym, Nazi doctors, physician responsibilities, and justice[1]

Who was Hans Joachim Scherer?

My essay in *The Pharos* presented my personal experience confronting Nazi eponyms as a powerful reminder of our obligation, indeed imperative, to not remain silent when we perceive injustice.

The piece listed those eponyms associated with individuals that history has considered to have been "Nazi and Nazi sympathizing physicians," as reflected in the medical literature. Among those mentioned was Hans Joachim Scherer (Van Bogaert-Scherer-Epstein syndrome, or cerebrotendinous xanthomatosis).

Dr. Scherer's son wrote me on December 15, 2025, asking me to read material about his father of which I was unaware, asking for "more circumspection and accuracy," and believing that his father was a victim of false accusations.

I have shared this correspondence with the editors of *The Pharos.* The records show that Hans Joachim Scherer examined brains of at least 208 euthanized children, the killing itself an atrocity. He was a colleague of neuropathologists, who were Nazis and accomplices to child euthanasia. Certain literature considered him a Nazi or Nazi-sympathizer.[2–4] However, interrogating archives in Germany did not identify Hans Joachim Scherer as a Nazi party member. Beyond this, my reading of the available literature was uncertain, with conflicting perspectives about Scherer.

I felt that writing this letter as an emendation of my essay should be published in the literature. I have shared these—and more extensive—comments with Sherer's son.

References

1. Panush R. When silence is wrong. Reflections on pursuing an historic injustice, expunging the Reiter eponym, and physicians' social responsibility. *Pharos Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Med Soc.* Summer 2024; 87(3):26–30.
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3. Strous RD, Edelman MC. Eponyms and the Nazi era: time to remember and time for change. *IMAJ.* 2007; 9:207–14.
4. Peiffer J, Kleihues P. Hans-Joachim Scherer (1906-1945), pioneer in glioma research. *Brain Pathol.* 1999; 241–5.

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Write a letter to the Editor

The Pharos values thoughtful dialogue and the exchange of ideas, and we appreciate hearing from readers who wish to respond to articles we publish. Letters offer an opportunity to extend the conversation—whether by adding perspective, raising questions, or engaging respectfully with differing viewpoints. Your response helps foster an ongoing dialogue within our community and contributes to the reflective exchange at the heart of the journal.

Readers who wish to submit a letter to the Editor are invited to contact us at: thepharos@alphaomegaalpha.org.