

Prof. B. Cribier, Strasbourg, was interviewed by Prof. Dr. Ingrid Moll, Hamburg

“Be Enthusiastic – Be Curious”



Why have you decided to become a dermatologist?

Prof. B. Cribier: Because I read a book by Prof. Jean-Paul Escande, entitled “Doctors” when I was 16. In this book he described his career in Paris and every step from First year of Medical

school to becoming a Professor. J.-P.

Escande was a famous professor of dermatology in Hôpital Tarnier, Paris.

I was also interested in surgery but I very early understood that a medical specialty would be more suited to my way of thinking. I am fascinated by every aspect of images, not only in medicine but also in art. I think I wanted to become a Professor in Medicine as much as I wanted to be a dermatologist. Teaching is the best part of my professional life.

What was the most unusual case you ever saw?

Prof. B. Cribier: Diagnosis: A case of familial progressive mucinous histiocytosis in a brother and sister. Treatment: A patient who had a 1-week unexplained coma, 2 episodes of cardiac infarction and skin changes; treatment with immunoglobulins after having made the diagnosis of dermato-neuro syndrome associated with scleromyxedema. She survived!

Which scientist taught you most intensively?

Prof. B. Cribier: Prof. Edouard Grosshans, but I also consider A. Bernard Ackerman as an inspiring mentor.

What was the best advice you ever got in your life?

Prof. B. Cribier: “Describe what you see under the microscope and not what you have been taught in medical school” (A.B. Ackerman).

What is the most important development in Dermatology in our days?

Prof. B. Cribier: Targeted therapies for psoriasis and melanoma, and many others to come.

What do you think about the future of Dermatology in Europe? Are there specialities in France?

Prof. B. Cribier: I am very confident in the future of dermatology. This is the best possible specialty in medicine. People will always need dermatologists. We have around 3000 practicing dermatologists in France, and of course dermatology itself is a specialty. We have sub-specialities like dermatosurgery, dermatopathology, vascular diseases, allergology etc. and many very active clinical research groups of the French Society of Dermatology in each subspecialty.

What is your advice for young colleagues?

Prof. B. Cribier: Be enthusiastic about the skin, have a look in a microscope as often as possible. Be curious. Read and publish. Confront ideas. Spend at least one year doing research.

What is the most fascinating subject on adnexal structures?

Prof. B. Cribier: The wonderful complexity of a very much overlooked organ: the follicular unit. Nature has invented the most exciting structure of the human body: the hair. No wonder there are so many tumors derived from it. Normal hair itself would be enough for a lifetime occupation.

What is your advice for male baldness for your patients?

Prof. B. Cribier: If you cannot accept it, apply minoxidil. If you are not afraid of sexual side-effects, you might try finasteride.

What are you mostly doing in leisure hours?

Prof. B. Cribier: I try to run 3 hours a week, I go to the opera and ballet during the year. In summer, reading all day long on the beach in Normandy (never too hot) is my favorite occupation. I hate airports and am not fond of long distance flights. I much prefer visiting European cities, which I do in Spring every year.

What is your favourite village to show guests from abroad in Alsac? Which typical subject, for example church, City Hall or landscape do you demonstrate foreign guests?

Prof. B. Cribier: In Strasbourg: Palais Rohan and the Cathedral (and the Dermatology Clinic). In the country: Mittelbergheim and the surrounding Route des Vins.