

Poul Hyttel

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Poul Hyttel grew up in Skagen. In 1973 he was enrolled at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (RVAU) in Copenhagen and in 1979 he graduated as a DVM. He received his PhD in 1982 based on a thesis on repeat breeding and initial embryology in cattle. During the PhD project Poul got fascinated by electron microscopy which he initially applied on bovine blastocysts. This passion, however, developed and he conducted detailed electron microscopical studies of oocyte maturation, fertilization and embryonic development in cattle, which lead to his degree as Doctor of Veterinary Sciences in 1988 from RVAU. Poul was, together with Henrik Callesen, member Torben Greve's team behind the first IVF calf in Europe. Subsequently, the morphological studies were extended to horse, pig, sheep, fox, mouse, tiger and man.

Since 1990, Poul has been the Professor of Anatomy at RVAU; now University of Copenhagen. In his new position he continued the cell biological studies on oocyte development, fertilization and initial embryogenesis. He had the pleasure of becoming supervisor of a series of PhD students most of whom spent ample time at the transmission electron microscope in the basement of the old Anatomy Building. Subsequently, Poul embarked on embryonic stem cell research in cattle and pig and these activities became a steppingstone to the use of human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) and gene editing for modelling neurodegeneration (e.g. Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease). In 2015 he founded the Stem Cell Center of Excellence in Neurology, BrainStem, supported by Innovation Fund Denmark. The iPSC activities reflected back on veterinary medicine where the condition canine cognitive dysfunction is now studied by means of canine iPSCs. Finally, Poul's research circle was closed by funding of the project EliteOva by Innovation Fund Denmark with the aim of implementing in vitro embryo production and genomic selection of embryos in Danish cattle breeding.

Since 1985 Poul has attracted more than 18 million € in for research projects. He has authored more than 290 refereed international articles and has been the principal supervisor of more than 40 PhD-students and postdocs.

In 1997-1998 Poul was President of the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS), in 2011 he was awarded Doctor Honoris Causa at University of Antwerp, Belgium, in 2015 he was knighted 1st Class Order for his services to Denmark, in 2018 he was awarded Doctor Honoris Causa at Estonian University of Life Sciences, Tartu, Estonia, and in 2019 he received the Pioneer Award of the Association for Embryo Technology in Europe (AETE).