

Obituary



Professor Ingrid Matheson

Ingrid: 1947–1998

Professor Ingrid Matheson, who died in Oslo on September 6th at the age of only 51, was a distinguished health worker, a champion of the safe use of medicines, and a charming and unforgettable friend to many. As a pharmacist she very soon learnt to step lightly across the barrier which sometimes lies between her science and that of medical practice, spending a great part of her career among doctors at Oslo University's Institute of Pharmacotherapy. She taught inspiringly and with humour and she researched untiringly. One of the salient elements in her career was the study of the excretion of drugs in breast milk, where she combined sound laboratory work with policy development; she was a prominent member of the team led by Peter Bennett of Bath which in 1988 published a first edition of *Drugs in Human Lactation*, proceeding to a second edition eight years later. It is an area in which facts, mere suppositions and frank errors have been intermingled and transposed by many authors from one paper into another in the course of a century, and in which the truth has often become elusive; the work of Ingrid and her colleagues was scholarly and realistic, and has put good medical practice in that field firmly back on the rails.

When Ingrid Matheson became ill with a vicious breast cancer in 1992 her battle with it became a rallying point for many other patients as she tackled – and defeated – a bureaucratic regime which threatened to deprive women of the most advanced treatment available for metastasized tumours. Together with her own courageous spirit, the therapy carried her through for six years. A little over two weeks before her death she was still at her office in the Institute, still teaching, still working. And she was still smiling.