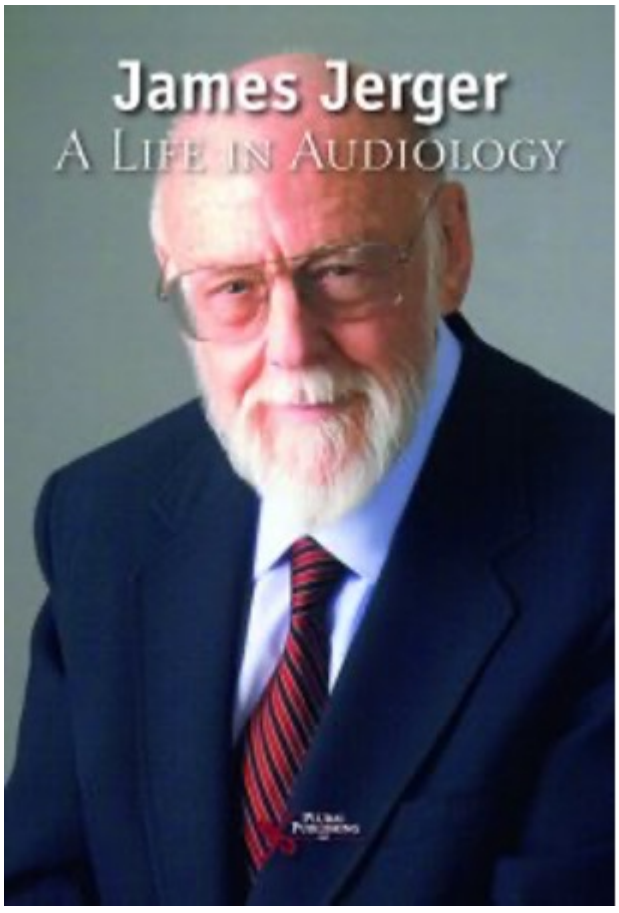
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Dr. James Jerger, PhD
By Marshall Chasin, AuD.
Editor in Chief, CanadianAudiologist.ca



I have had the privilege of meeting Jim Jerger on many occasions over the years; mostly at the annual conferences of the American Academy of Audiology. He recently passed away, but he will not be forgotten. Jim Jerger is the father of modern clinical audiology. His work transcended the boundary between pure research and the clinic.

Like many of us, Jim “fell” into audiology. He joined the American army at the very end of WWII and because the army was more concerned with bringing home their soldiers, Jim never even had basic training. While he was posted as a guard at an US based facility, it started to rain, and Jim sought out cover inside a building. He was reprimanded for leaving his post but nobody ever told him he wasn’t supposed to leave his post. But the army gave him many opportunities and paid for his education.

When he was a young PhD student working with a supervisor named Raymond Carhart, he and his colleagues were asked if anyone was interested in studying a new technology called acoustic impedance and tympanometry. He volunteered and … the rest is history. Much of what we know about acoustic impedance came from Jim's early work on this topic.

Jim Jerger's approach to the new field of audiology was a bit controversial. He believed strongly in "case studies" rather than large sample studies of many subjects. Although current research techniques are based on studies large number of subjects, sometimes interesting results can be lost in the statistical averaging of the data. Jim was able to show clearly in some cases that a certain pathological evoked response was representative of a clear site of lesion in the brain, and much of the early site of lesion knowledge we have came from single subject design studies that Jim had performed.

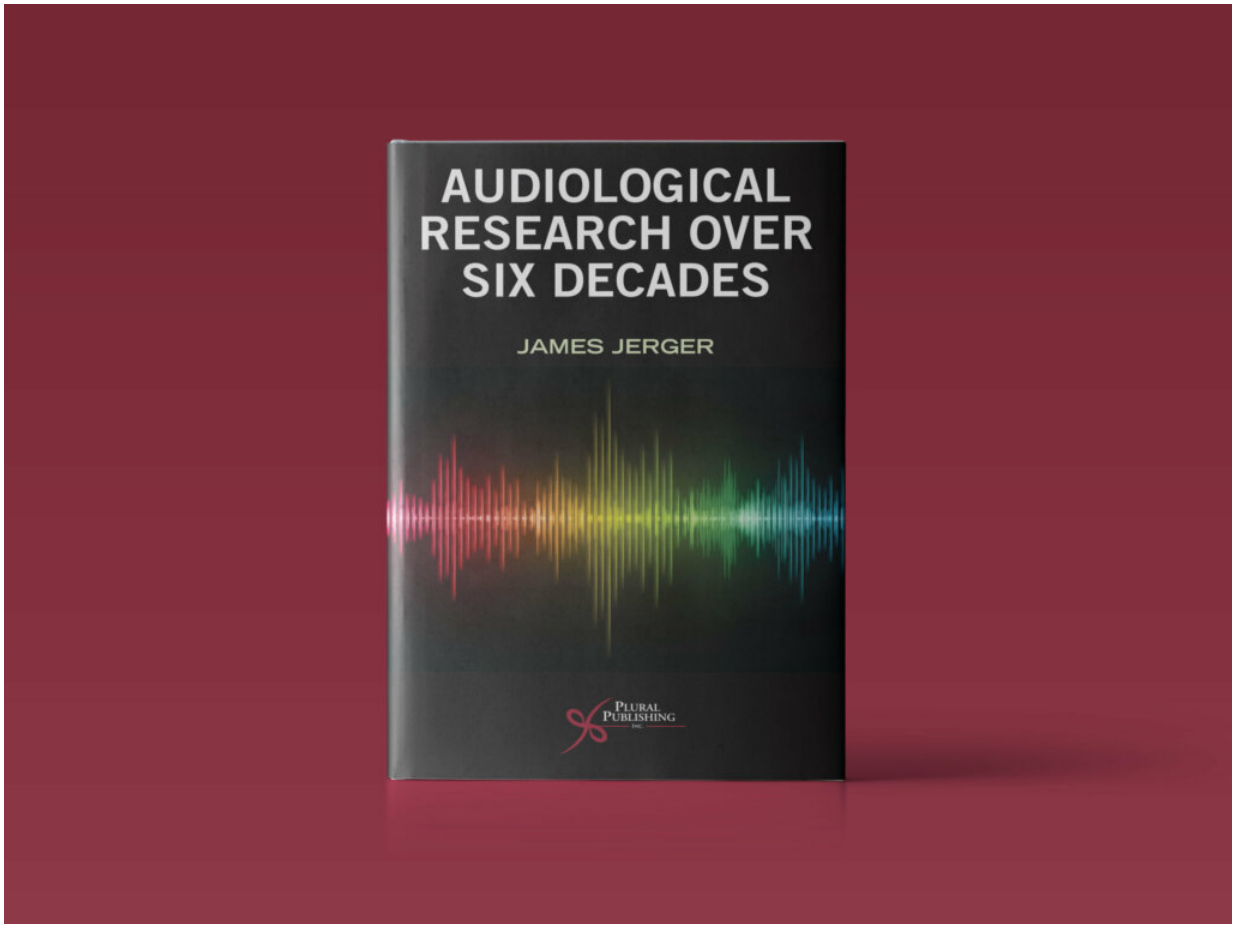
Jim loved clinicians, but not in a paternalistic way. He didn't view the world of audiology as a one-way street where a researcher handed results to the clinician on a silver plater. He expected important information back from the clinical trenches. He saw Audiologists as clinical scientists and, understandably was the driving force behind the development of the Doctor of Clinical Audiology training programs in the United States.

To my mind, among his greatest contributions to our field was the simple "right ear advantage" which, among other things, provided anatomical and physiological insight to learning disabilities and central auditory processing. I remember chatting with him at a conference, and he admitted making a mistake in calling this "the right ear advantage". If he had it do over again, he would have named this a "left ear disadvantage".

Jim has written countless articles, given numerous talks, and an impressive number of authored and edited textbooks. He also wrote two personal memoirs of his lift as an early audiologist. Reviews of both of these books appeared in CanadianAudiologist.ca "James Jerger: A Life in Audiology" (**VOL. 4 • ISSUE 2 • 2017** and "Audiological Research Over Six Decades" (Vol. 9, issue 1, 2022).

A quote of a paragraph from his 2017 book tells us who Jim was: "My principle purpose in writing this book is to influence students who may be contemplating… a career in the field of audiology that has rewarded me so richly. Along the way I hope to tell you something of my research and of the many colleagues and friends who have influenced my thoughts and my work in ways that I can never fully repay."

The field of Audiology has been very lucky to have someone like him as one of our fathers.



Charles Berlin 1934—2024

Dr. Chuck Berlin, PhD., ... *Superhearo*- he will be missed.

By Karen MacIver-Lux, M.A., Reg. CASLPO, Aud(C), LSLS Cert. AVT



Once upon a time in the late 1990s, there was a 7-month-old boy who was diagnosed with bilateral Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD). The child's audiologist was hesitant to put hearing aids on the infant because he appeared to hear soft speech/environmental sounds and respond appropriately to his name and spoken language used by his family. A repeat ABR confirmed the presence of ANSD. His audiologist referred the infant and his family to another audiologist, an aural rehabilitation practitioner, for early intervention to confirm the child's functional auditory access to speech sounds and to monitor his listening and spoken language development. The early intervention was Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT), a type of intervention that experts in ANSD did not recommend.

The aural rehabilitation practitioner contacted Dr. Charles "Chuck" Berlin, an expert in ANSD (and yes, he didn't like AVT) for his guidance. She explained that she observed that the child was detecting all sounds of the speech spectrum and was responding appropriately to the family's spoken communication, nursery rhymes, and songs… behaviours typically not seen in children with ANSD. Dr. Berlin reviewed the audiologist's clinical findings and then called the family to hear their story, observations, concerns and dreams. Dr. Berlin agreed to become part of the team of professionals who would help this young boy and his family navigate the uncharted territory of ANSD.

Thus began a seven-year collaborative relationship that consisted of meetings on the phone to discuss observations, results of assessments, reviews of audiograms, and plans for intervention. He even took time at conferences to review video clips of therapy sessions that showed the boy's listening and spoken language prowess. Baffling and unexpected observations did not seem to faze Dr. Berlin. His thorough understanding of the science of ANSD and its' effect on the timing aspects of speech helped the family and professionals understand the reason for this boy's unique

listening and spoken communication skills. His time and expertise lowered everyone's anxiety and helped the family confidently move forward on their journey of living with ANSD. A unique journey that confirmed that ANSD indeed has several presentations that require different, perhaps unorthodox interventions.

The above story is one of many stories that have Dr. Berlin called the a "*superhearo*."

His years of research and collaboration with colleagues around the world led to significant advancements in understanding ANSD, improving confidence in the diagnostic and intervention process. As a passionate advocate for individuals with hearing challenges, Dr. Berlin aided countless individuals with significant hearing difficulties (my favourite being those with severe to profound hearing loss), championing their hearing wellness and connection to the world around them.

Colleagues, professionals, and students found Dr. Berlin to be a brilliant partner in hearing research and care, an open-minded professional with common sense and bravery, and an exceptional teacher who could make complicated concepts easier to understand with relatable and humorous analogies.

His contribution to respectful care and attention in his professional duties and passions was remarkable, and his dedication to his favorite soundscapes, particularly jazz music, showcased his understanding of the extraordinary benefits that music provides to the auditory centers of the brain and the heart.

Both individuals with hearing loss (and their families) and the professionals who serve them owe an extraordinary amount of gratitude to Dr. Berlin and his family for their support and dedication. His passion for optimizing hearing, listening, and communication potential will remain unmatched, however, I'm confident that many will strive to continue his legacy for years to come.

As for the boy with ANSD and his family? They are living life to the fullest, sustained by the knowledge and confidence Dr. Berlin imparted. They will never forget his voice, counsel and positive energy.

And that aural rehabilitation practitioner who practiced AVT and brought Dr. Berlin along for the ride (yes…he came to respect and like AVT)? She will never forget the way his eyes lit up with delight when he watched a video of the boy debating (Dr. Berlin sure loved debates!) the rules of a card game and singing the "Spiderman" song.

After all, that song was perfect for the *superhearo* that Dr. Berlin was.

(picture courtesy of Karen MacIver-Lux)