



Frank Parsons 1918-1989

Renal Physician

Frank Parsons graduated in Leeds in 1943 and as a surgical trainee worked in Leslie Pyrah's Surgical Metabolism Unit at Leeds Infirmary.

In 1953 he went to America to continue his research and met doctors there who had used dialysis to treat wounded soldiers with acute kidney failure in Korea. He returned to Leeds convinced of the value of dialysis.

He and Leslie Pyrah persuaded the Infirmary Board of Governors to purchase a dialysis machine for what was then an enormous sum of £5,500. The Medical Research Council was very much against its use at first and for a time the LGI and the Hammersmith Hospital provided the entire dialysis service for acute renal failure in the UK, with most patients being transferred to Leeds by train.

Parsons, along with European colleagues, was instrumental in creating what became the European Dialysis & Transplant Association.

Leeds provided training in dialysis for many nephrologists, but it took several years for dialysis to be generally accepted in the UK and for most Teaching Hospitals to install a dialysis machine. There were many technical problems to overcome, but Parsons and colleagues persisted in an atmosphere that was at the time, generally unsympathetic. They continued to develop modifications of dialysis and the 'Leeds' machine was still in occasional use until about 1980.

