

Arne Torkildsen

Arne Torkildsen was a pioneering Norwegian neurosurgeon who introduced the [ventriculocisternal shunt](#), the first clinically successful shunt for CSF diversion in hydrocephalus. The procedure, usually referred to as [ventriculocisternostomy](#) (VCS), Torkildsen's operation, or Torkildsen's shunt, became internationally recognized as an efficient operation for the treatment of noncommunicating hydrocephalus. The operation gained widespread use in the 1940s and 1950s before the introduction of extracranial shunts.

In the paper of Eide PK, Lundar T. Arne Torkildsen and the ventriculocisternal shunt: the first clinically successful shunt for hydrocephalus. J Neurosurg. 2015 Sep 4;1-8. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 26339852,, the authors look more closely at Torkildsen's development of the VCS and examine how this surgical approach differed from other procedures for treating hydrocephalus before World War II. Long-term results of the VCS are presented ¹⁾.

Following [Vilhelm Magnus](#), neurosurgical procedures were for whike performed by professor Ragnvald Ingebrigtsen (1882-1975). Arne Torkildsen's (b. 1899) interest in neurosurgery started at the time of Magnus' death in 1929. Torkildsen trained abroad, first 1 year at the National Hospital in London and then 4 years with Wilder Penfield in Montreal as one of his first four fellows. His research activities included the anatomy of the ventricles and intracranial tumors. Torkildsen returned to Oslo in 1935 and became chief of a separate section for neurosurgery in 1940. In Oslo-[Norway](#), he invented what is known as the Torkildsen operation for noncommunicating hydrocephalus (a shunt from the lateral ventricle to the cisterna magna). He published the first four cases in 1939, and the methods were soon adopted in major neurosurgical departments.

Torkildsen was considered a very good surgeon, and some of the children he operated on during the 1940s for intracranial tumors are still alive and well functioning. ²⁾.

Following the work of these pioneers, departments of neurosurgery were established in both teaching hospitals in Oslo (Ullevål and Rikshospitalet) under the leadership of professor Kristian Kristiansen (b. 1907) and professor Tormod Hauge (b. 1909). Later on departments were established in Bergen, [Trondheim](#) and Tromsø ³⁾.

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