

Carl or Karl Wernicke (/ˈvɛərɪkə/ or /ˈvɛərɪki/; German: [ˈvɛʁɪkə]) (15 May 1848 – 15 June 1905) was a German physician, anatomist, psychiatrist and neuropathologist. His first name has long appeared in print in both the Karl and Carl spelling variants (see Charles).

He earned his medical degree at the University of Breslau (1870). He later spent six months in Vienna, studying with neuropathologist Theodor Meynert, who would have a profound influence upon Wernicke's career. From 1876 to 1878 he served as a first assistant under Karl Westphal in the clinic for psychiatry and nervous diseases at the Berlin Charité. Afterwards, he founded a private neuropsychiatric practice in Berlin, and from 1885, served as an associate professor of neurology and psychiatry at Breslau. In 1890 he attained the chair at Breslau, later performing similar functions at the University of Halle (1904). He died the following year due to injuries suffered from a bicycle accident in the Thuringian Forest.

Shortly after [Paul Broca](#) published his findings on language deficits caused by damage to what is now referred to as Broca's area, Wernicke began pursuing his own research into the effects of brain disease on speech and language. Wernicke noticed that not all language deficits were the result of damage to Broca's area. Rather he found that damage to the left posterior, superior temporal gyrus resulted in deficits in language comprehension. This region is now referred to as Wernicke's area, and the associated syndrome is known as Wernicke's aphasia (receptive aphasia), for his discovery.[3][4]

Eponyms[edit] Wernicke aphasia: The eponymous term for receptive or Sensory aphasia. It is the inability to understand speech, or to produce meaningful speech, caused by lesions to the posterior superior temporal gyrus.[5][6] Wernicke encephalopathy: An acute neurological dysfunction caused by a thiamine deficiency. It is characterized by the triad of ophthalmoparesis, ataxia and mental confusion. When combined with Korsakoff psychosis, a subacute dementia syndrome, it is then called Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome.

Wernicke's pupillary reaction: The absence of direct reaction to light in the blind part of the retina. First described by ophthalmologist Hermann Wilbrand in 1881.

Publications

In 1897, with Theodor Ziehen (1862-1950), he founded the journal *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie*.

Principal written works by Wernicke include:

Der aphasische Symptomencomplex. Eine psychologische Studie auf anatomischer Basis; Breslau, M. Crohn und Weigert, 1874. - The aphasic symptom complex: a psychological study from an anatomical basis. Lehrbuch der Gehirnkrankheiten : für Aerzte und Studirende, 1881 - Textbook of brain diseases: for doctors and students. Über hemiopische Pupillenreaktion, in Fortschritte der Medicin, 1883, 1: 49-53. - On hemianopsic pupillary response.

Grundriss der Psychiatrie in klinischen Vorlesungen, 1894 - Foundation of psychiatry in clinical lectures. Atlas des Gehirns; Schnitte durch das menschliche Gehirn in photographischen Originalen, 1897 - Atlas of the brain; sections of the human brain from photographic originals. Krankenvorstellungen aus der psychiatrischen klinik in Breslau, 1899 - Ideas on illness from the psychiatric clinic in Breslau. Books about Carl Wernicke:

“Wernicke's works on aphasia : a sourcebook and review” by Gertrude H Eggert, 1977.

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