

In Memoriam - Professor Patrick Netter (1947–2026)



Research, Knowledge Transmission and Scientific Excellence in the Service of Medicine

It is with profound sadness that we learned of the passing of Professor Patrick Netter, who died in Nancy on **8 August 2026**, at the age of seventy-eight. With his death, France has lost a major figure in medicine and research, and a man who played a committed role in the scientific renewal of thermal medicine.

Born in **Épinal on 8 October 1947**, Netter dedicated his career to uniting patient care and research. He became a hospital intern in Nancy in 1972, received his medical degree in 1977, and served as assistant and senior clinical lecturer in rheumatology before completing a State **Doctorate in Human Biology specializing in pharmacology**. In 1981 he was **appointed Professor of Pharmacology and Hospital Practitioner**.

His research focused on the **cellular and molecular mechanisms of joint diseases**, earning him national and international recognition. From 1997 to 2008 he headed the joint CNRS–University of Nancy research unit on the pathophysiology and pharmacology of joint disorders, and authored or co-authored over four hundred scientific publications.

He was also an institution builder. **From 1997 he headed the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology at Nancy University Hospital, and from 2003 to 2008 served as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Nancy**. He later joined the CNRS national leadership as **Scientific Director of the Life Sciences Department**, then as **Director of the Institute of Biological Sciences (2009–2013)**. He also served as **Vice-President of AVIESAN, Director of the Biology,**

Medicine and Health Division at the University of Lorraine, and expert adviser to the French Court of Auditors.

A member of the French National Academy of Medicine, Professor Emeritus at the University of Lorraine, and Honorary Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Nancy, he remained deeply committed to research, education and knowledge transmission, chairing the Academy's Training, Research and Innovation Commission.

This commitment extended naturally to thermal medicine. Netter believed its future depended on clinical research, rigorous evaluation and robust evidence, holding these practices to the standards of Evidence-Based Medicine without opposing tradition to modern science. He was a **founding member of the Association des Amis du Thermalisme**, born from the momentum of the Committee of Sages around the Nancy Thermal project, and **supported the Université du Thermalisme from its earliest years**, bringing to it the authority of a physician, researcher and academician. In 2025 he was still serving as French Vice-President of its Scientific Council, and he **represented the University of Lorraine on the Executive Committee of the Institut Européen du Thermalisme.**

His achievements were recognised with some of France's highest honours: **Commander of the National Order of Merit, and Commander of the Legion of Honour**, an insignia he received at the Élysée Palace in March 2024.

Yet beyond this institutional career, those who knew him will remember his discretion, his ability to listen, and his simplicity — placing his experience at the service of others without ever seeking the spotlight.

For the Université du Thermalisme, the Amis du Thermalisme and the Institut Européen du Thermalisme, his loss is especially significant, coming soon after that of Professor Michel Boulangé, another figure who gave our work its academic and scientific depth.

Scientists leave behind more than titles and publications: they leave a method, a standard of excellence, a way of thinking. Netter leaves the legacy of a man for whom knowledge had value only when transmitted and shared, for whom rigour was never incompatible with kindness and loyalty. Alongside Michel Boulangé, he helped build lasting links between thermal medicine, academia, research and evidence-based practice.

We will carry forward what he taught us: rigour before assertion, evidence before certainty, curiosity and openness in every advance of medicine.

To his wife, daughters, grandchildren, family, colleagues, collaborators, students and friends, we extend our deepest condolences.

Patrick Netter will be greatly missed at our meetings, in our discussions and in our shared reflections. Yet his scientific standards, his loyalty and the trust he placed in us will continue to guide and inspire us for many years to come.

Thank you, Professor Patrick Netter, for everything you built, everything you taught, and everything you shared with us.