

**EPONYMS IN DERMATOLOGY LITERATURE LINKED TO NORWAY**Khalid Al Aboud<sup>1</sup>, Daifullah Al Aboud<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Pathology Department, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, USA<sup>2</sup>Dermatology Department, Taif University, Taif, Saudi Arabia**Source of Support:**  
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An eponym is a word derived from the name of a person. The use of eponyms has long been contentious, but many remain in common use.

Medical literature in general, has many eponyms, coined after scientists from all over the world.

In this communication, we shall highlight on selected eponyms linked to Norway in dermatology literature.

Norway has a population of about 5 million and it is the second least densely populated country in Europe. Yet, it was, and still the birthplace for great scientists. The strive for scientific advance and humanitarianism are among the characteristics of this small country. It has few examples of medical scientists that has discovered and cultivated unknown territory [1].

Most dermatologists are aware of the term „Norwegian scabies”, which is currently best known as „crusted scabies”, a condition where the patient may harbor up to many millions of mites. This type of scabies was called Norwegian scabies on account of its first recognition in Norway in 1848 among patients with leprosy [2].

The well-known whonamedit website, ([www.whonamedit.com](http://www.whonamedit.com)), listed till now more than 30 medical eponyms linked to Norway.

But some of these medical eponyms are no longer in common use in medicine.

For example, Følling's disease or Følling's syndrome is the eponymous name for the autosomal recessive metabolic genetic disorder; Phenylketonuria (PKU) [1].

Asbjørn Følling (1888-1973), was a Norwegian physiologist. He discovered „his disease” (phenylketonuria = PKU) in 1934. He discovered the first link between metabolic disease and brain development [1].

Another example of medical eponym linked to Norway, which is not popular at present time is Harbitz-Müller syndrome, which is best known, as familial hypercholesterolemia [3].

Francis Gottfred Harbitz (1867-1950), and Carl Arnoldus

Müller (1886-1983), were both Norwegian physicians. From 1925 to 1938, the pathologist, Francis Harbitz, published several reports on sudden death and xanthomatosis. Harbitz called attention to certain peculiarities of the xanthomatosis. Microscopically he found that the so-called foam cells are more marked and more characteristic than in senile arteriosclerosis [3].

However, some medical eponyms linked to Norway are still in common use.

In Table I [4-10], we listed selected eponyms in dermatology literature, which are linked to Norway.

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Eponyms in dermatology literature linked to Norway	Remarks
Boeck's sarcoidosis	<p>This eponym (also, called Boeck's sarcoid and sarcoidosis Boeck), is now largely replaced by the term "sarcoidosis". In 1899, Cæsar Peter Møller Boeck (1845-1917), (Fig. 1), Professor of Dermatology in Kristiania (now Oslo), published his pioneer article called "Multiple benign sarkoid of skin".</p> <p>Boeck coined the name sarcoidosis which stems from the Greek words "sark" (meaning flesh) and "oid" (meaning like). His uncle was Karl Wilhelm Boeck (1808-1875), known for his work on syphilis [4].</p> <p>Together with Boeck, the English physician, Jonathan Hutchinson (1828-1913), and the French physicians, Ernest Besnier (1831-1909), and Henri Tenneson (1836-1913) were all pioneers in sarcoidosis work, even though the connections between them were made clear many years later [4].</p> <p>Boeck coined an instantly acceptable term, sarkoid, and perhaps most important, he accurately and lucidly depicted the classic histologic features of this characteristic granuloma. 'So, history justifies the term Boeck's sarcoidosis' [4,5]. Boeck's compatriot, Ansgar Kveim (1892-1966), presented, in 1941, the Kveim reaction for diagnostic use. The swede, Jörgen Schaumann (1879-1953), demonstrated early the generalized character of the disease. His compatriot, Sven Löfgren (1901-1978), described the combination of erythema nodosum, polyarthritis, fever, and bilateral hilar lymphadenopathy, called Lofgren's syndrome, the most usual form of acute sarcoidosis [4].</p>  <p><b>Figure 1. Cæsar Peter Møller Boeck (1845-1917). Courtesy, National Library of Medicine</b></p>
Hansen's disease	<p>This term is used as a synonym for leprosy. Descending from a Danish family, Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen (1845-1917) (Fig. 2), Graduated in medicine in 1866 from the University at Christiania (the former name of Oslo). He began his work on a disease known as leprosy at the age of 26 and as an assistant of Daniel Cornelius Danielssen (1815-1894), at the Lungegaarden Hospital [5]. While Danielssen leaned toward heredity as a dominant factor in leprosy, Hansen's conviction was that the disease must have an infectious causal agent [5]. In about 1871, Hansen began to observe tiny little rods in tissue specimens and considered they could be the etiologic agent of leprosy, the more he found these rods in all the infiltrated nodular lesions in his patients. Finally, he proposed on February 28, 1873, that the rods were bacilli, responsible of leprosy [5]. He edited the journal &lt;&lt;Lepra&gt;&gt;. Hansen was also an eminent zoologist engaged in studies involving mollusks and worms; since 1874, he was president of the Bergen Museum of Natural History. Armauer Hansen died on February 12, 1912, and the funeral ceremonies took place in the Museum of Bergen where his ashes are still kept [5].</p>

Table I. Selected Eponyms in dermatology literature linked to Norway



Figure 2. Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen (1841-1912). Courtesy, National Library of Medicine

Eponyms in dermatology literature linked to Norway	Remarks
<p>Refsum's disease</p>	<p>Refsum disease is an autosomal recessive inborn error of lipid metabolism classically characterized by a tetrad of clinical abnormalities: retinitis pigmentosa peripheral neuropathy, cerebellar ataxia, and elevated protein levels in the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) without an increase in the number of cells. The disease presented in the skin as ichthyotic changes [7-10].</p> <p>Sigvald Bernhard Refsum (1907-1991) (Fig. 3), was an outstanding Norwegian neurologist, highly respected and recognized both nationally and internationally. He first described this disorder and noted the hereditary aspect. In his monograph from 1946 he named the disease "heredopathia atactica polyneuritiformis"; however, it was rapidly known as Refsum's disease. Twenty years later, two German scientists, Klenk and Kahlke, detected large amounts of a peculiar branched-chain fatty acid, phytanic acid, in a Refsum patient. This started an amazing revelation of the biochemical background of the disease, and also led to a logical and effective treatment. Although Refsum's disease is extremely rare, it has become well-known due to this elucidation of both the normal metabolism of phytanic acid and the pathophysiology of the disease [7-10].</p> <div data-bbox="497 1223 836 1724" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="836 1574 1422 1720" data-label="Caption"> <p>Figure 3. Sigvald Bernhard Refsum (1907-1991). This figure is reproduced with permission from the great Norwegian encyclopedia (Store norske leksikon), Available Online at; <a href="http://snl.no/Sigvald_Bernhard_Refsum">http://snl.no/Sigvald_Bernhard_Refsum</a></p> </div>

Table I. Selected Eponyms in dermatology literature linked to Norway (continued)

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