

## Auscultation: Listening makes you take notice

„You're not listening to me!" and "You're not hearing well!" - who has never heard these words? Now and then it happens to me as an almost 70 year old, the words come from the best wife of all. The accusation, which is only partly justified, has various motives that should not be mentioned here; one day a hearing care professional will prove me right.



Postage due cover with the stamp of the series "Famous Personalities" issued on 11.8.1952 with the illustration of Dr. Laennec. The appreciation and importance of Dr. Laennec's invention is shown by the fact that he was immortalized in this series together with Flaubert and Manet, among others.

People want to know how others think, feel, or whose hearts are beating or lungs are pumping. Then auscultation is the order of the day. When doctors had no listening devices, the uncle doctor would put his ear to the patient's back or chest to listen for irregularities in breathing or heartbeat. René Laennec (1781-1826) was apparently dissatisfied with the limited results of auscultation by body contact [Laennec died of TB at the age of 45!] or saw this as a problem due to infections of himself. In any case, he is considered the inventor of the stethoscope - a wooden tube with a speaker-like extension on the side facing the patient. Laennec was able to detect and describe malformations in the human liver, which he initially interpreted as a malignant neoplasm; today it is called liver cirrhosis. He is considered the founder of the recognition of thoracic diseases, thus replacing the four-juice theory of Hippocrates.

One contemporary should be mentioned here: Leopold Auenbrugger (1722-1809) from Graz - in 1761 he published "New invention by means of striking the human chest, as a sign to discover hidden chest

diseases" - today we call it percussion. Both physicians, Laennec and Auenbrugger, are considered pioneers of physical diagnostics.



Indirect philatelic appreciation of Dr. Auenbrugger by the means of a postage meter stamp of the LKH Graz in Austria.

My uncle was a gifted goiter surgeon and was always of the opinion that "today's" apparatus medicine was no better than percussion and auscultation, provided the physician was able to interpret the sounds correctly.

*Weiterführende Literatur: Wikipedia. Delcampe-Shop unserer Medizinphilatelie.*