

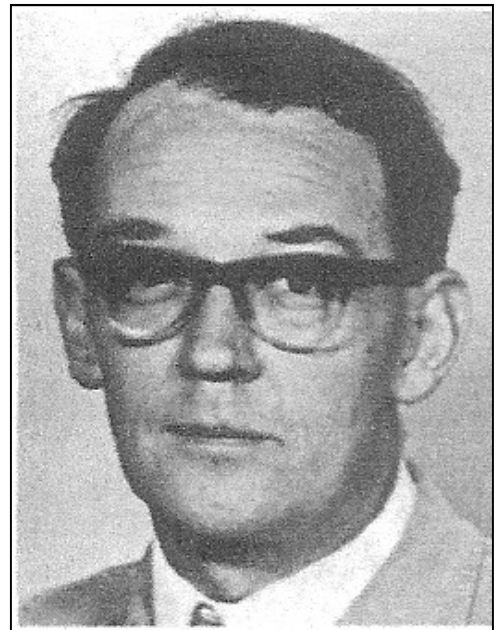
PROFESSOR MICHAEL ROWLAND ALDERSON (born 1931).

M.B., B.S., M.D. (Lond.), M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (Eng.), M.F.O.M., F.F.C.M., D.C.H. (Eng.), D.P.H. (Bristol), D.Obst.R.C.O.G. – Chief Medical Statistician, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, London.

“Although busy, he could always find time to listen and explain. He was a prolific author, and his advice was widely sought on many subjects because of his encyclopaedic knowledge and his constructive critical analysis.”

British Medical Journal (1988).

Michael Rowland Alderson (born 1931) [Epsom College 1945-1949] was the son of Major C. R. Alderson *M.C., M.M., R.A.M.C.*, of Eastbourne, Sussex. He received his medical education at Guy's Hospital, where he graduated *M.B., B.S.* in 1954. During his early medical career he took the diplomas of child health and in obstetrics in the same year, but the lure of public health was too great and he took the diploma of public health in Bristol and immediately joined the department there. He rapidly became part of the World Health Organisation international team studying the causes of adult mortality, a topic to which he frequently returned during his later career. In 1965 he joined the Medical Research Council's social medicine research unit at the London Hospital. Two years later he moved to the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Manchester, where, as well as teaching, he was Director of the Regional Cancer Epidemiology Unit. It was during the late 1960s that his interest into cancer strengthened and set the foundation for his main activity of the next two decades: the application of statistics and epidemiology to the understanding of why cancer affects some people and not others.



When Southampton Medical School was set up in 1970 he was appointed Professor of Medical Information Science, a position that he held for five years. At the same time he was Honorary Director of the Medical Information Unit of the Wessex Regional Health Authority. In 1975 he was appointed Professor of Epidemiology at the Institute of Cancer Research at the Royal Marsden Hospital. He then extended his activity into new topics, which included both a critical examination of the methods used in epidemiology and studies of the rates of cancer in several different occupations to find out whether there were any specific risks that needed preventive action. With such a background it came as no surprise that he was appointed in 1981 to be Chief Medical Statistician at the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, London. In 1987 he returned to Southampton to concentrate on analyses and surveys of international statistics on the incidence of cancer. He was the author of a standard textbook: *'Introduction to Epidemiology'* (1988), which was described in a review as “a mine of information about routine medical data...and is a fitting reflection of the wide scope of his career and of the exceptional depth as well as breadth of his knowledge.” Unfortunately Michael Alderson died shortly before the book was published.