

IN MEMORIAM

ACADEMIC MOMIR POLENAKOVIC, PEDIATRIC NEPHROLOGY, RARE DISEASES AND PUBLISHING IN MACEDONIA

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The death of Professor Momir Polenakovic is a major loss for Macedonian medicine and science. Professor Polenakovic was a great contributor in paediatric nephrology. His style was civility, respect, and kindness. As a young and enthusiastic doctor, he implemented percutaneous renal biopsy and immunofluorescent analysis of the kidney tissue and founded the laboratory for immunonephrology at the Clinic for Nephrology. He established an active and long-standing collaboration with the Department of Pediatric Nephrology at the Children's Hospital initially with Dr. Radmila Kotevska, Bojka Grceva and consequently with younger colleagues. This collaboration was further enhanced with to the Institute of Pathology at the Medical School with Prof. Grozdanov and Mrs. Roganovic, who implemented electronmicroscopy. Renal biopsy was an important and often decisive method in the kidney diseases investigation in children. Dr. Polenakovic's favourite topic was membranous nephropathy. In adult patients, its aetiology was an idiopathic one, while in children it was associated with HBV infection.

His great interest in pediatric nephrology originated from his stays and cooperation with well-known nephrologists from Guy's Hospital. John Stewart Cameron was a leading adult nephrologist at Guy's Hospital, but he was also a founder of the Department of Pediatric Nephrology at the same hospital. Sir Cyril Chantler later

undertook the chair of pediatric nephrology. This adult-pediatric cooperation persisted, and many scholars remember Prof. Polenakovic's lessons, given at the pediatric nephrology department. Prof. Polenakovic implemented this model in Skopje. He did overcome the competition between adult and pediatric nephrologists and encouraged cooperation and an open exchange of knowledge, experience, and facilities.

Prof. Polenakovic organized numerous nephrological congresses, symposia, and meetings, but he always made sure that pediatric topics were represented and paediatricians were welcome and honoured guests. He contacted pediatric nephrologists from abroad, but also all prominent pediatric nephrologists from the former Yugoslav Republics (Prof. Milana Popovic Rolovic, Prof. Angelina Cvoric, Prof. Istok Jaksa, Prof. Danica Batinic, Prof. Esma Cemerlic Zecevic and others).

Prof. Polenakovic professionally supported the development of pediatric nephrology in Macedonia, open consultation regarding patients, and he was often selflessly sharing his experience with others. He was also a strong proponent of scientific research. He mentored a pediatric doctoral thesis related to the clinical, biological, and prognostic aspects of post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis, from which four articles originated [1–4].

Prof. Polenakovic was characterized by a pleasant personality and clear communication skills. We paediatricians had a teacher, from whom we learned so much. He was beloved and highly respected in the Yugoslavian pediatric nephrology community. He stimulated international cooperation and projects. For him, prevention in nephrology was extremely important, and it starts at the earliest age (foetal programming of adult health) [5, 6]. He also understood the importance of genetic analysis in nephrology for early diagnosis, prevention, and personalized treatment [7, 8].

His activities in publishing have also been remarkable and impactful [10–12]. Prof. Polenakovic had an early understanding of how frequent, rare diseases are. Between 2011 and 2019, he assisted in organizing six meetings on rare diseases, attended by some of most prestigious scholars and scientists of Europe [13–17]. The meetings resulted in international projects (ICGEB), important publications [18–29], increased social awareness for the rare diseases, and, finally, the successful treatment of some patients with rare diseases with specific, and often, very expensive medications. The rare diseases community (medical professionals, patient organizations and patients) will sorely miss his civility, kindness, and good will.

Requiescat in pace.

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