

CASES OF INJUSTICE DONE TO PROMINENT FIGURES OF THE CLUJ MEDICAL SCHOOL

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Abstract

This is a presentation of few cases in the history of the Medical School of Cluj, when outstanding figures were victims of injustice, with respect to the acknowledgement of their priority works.

Keywords: injustice, prominent figures, Cluj Medical School.

Introduction

The medical school from Cluj-Napoca evolved and developed in three steps. They can be staged in time as follows [1]:

- A. Forerunners (1930-1920)
- B. The foundation (1920-1940)
- C. The continuation (1940-present)

The first public hospitals appeared in the 14th Century. In 1920 the medical school in Romanian language was established, within the frame of the University King Ferdinand I.

Particular features

One of the main particularities which marked a special feature to this medical school was the priority given to the sick man while caring out any medical activity. The founder of the medical faculty, Iuliu Hațieganu, used to say: "The patient is always right". The devotion for the patient generated another memorable sentence from Iuliu Hațieganu: "Medicine is science and conscience, warmed by the love of mankind".

Another feature is the approach of all medical problems based on the need of scientific ideas. The former rector of Octavian Fodor said: "medicine is the biological science in the service of mankind".

Teaching was preferably delivered by oral lectures, in a way following the classical peripathetical way to interact with the disciples. Lectures followed by practical lessons enhanced the relationship between the student and the teacher.

The classical figures of the medical school (a number of them coming from Blaj, a small town in the middle of Transylvania) were characterized by deontological relations, sobriety, sincerity and even humour [2-4].

In this wonderful atmosphere of collaboration and hard work, several outstanding discoveries or contributions

were made. But in some cases, these contributions were not correctly recognized worldwide. This happens usually in the case of small nations and is not singular to Cluj-Napoca in this country: we should mention the discovery of insulin by Nicolae Paulescu which remained ignored by the Nobel committee. Another case is the Papanicolau test, which actually was discovered by Aurel Babeș, therefore we always call this cytological test: Babeș-Papanicolau.

Below we describe briefly three cases when the pioneering work of Cluj-Napoca doctors remained unacknowledged by the international academic society.

Cases of injustice toward medical priorities of Cluj doctors

I. The so-called syndrome of cerebral hyposystolia is presented as coined by Cameron AJ in the international literature [5]. But he published his work in 1933, while few years before, the same entity was published by I. Hațieganu, P. Vancea and E. Anca in 1928 [6]. The first report by them was reiterated in several other papers until 1957, it is true that they were in the Romanian language [7-9].

II. Another case is the problem of the studies of the lipid metabolism, its effect on atherogenesis and the epidemiological studies undertaken by Moga et al. in this field [10-12]. Although they are among the first in Europe in this field, this contribution remains unknown and not cited. Again, the occurrence of these data in papers with limited circulation impaired the dissemination of information.

III. The most recent case is represented by the failure of the Nobel committee to recognize the contribution of professor Gheorghe Benga from Cluj-Napoca to the discovery of water channels [13-15]. Therefore he was absent from the list of Nobel laureates when this discovery was awarded with the Nobel prize. While the group of Benga published in 1986 their discovery from 1985, the work of Agre, credited for this discovery, was issued only 1998 [16]. He was awarded 2003 the Nobel prize for Chemistry. The story of this event was presented by Benga in a paper emphasizing another injustice for an investigator of the medical school from Cluj [17].

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