

In memoriam: Prof. Alexandru Constantinovici MD., PhD. (1929-2018)

Titular member of the Academy of Medical Sciences



Yet another distinguished personality of Romanian neurosurgery has passed away and left friends and pupils grieving.

Professor Alexandru Constantinovici, one of the most prominent neurosurgeons in postcommunist Romania has always been a beacon of fairness and dedication towards the training of neurosurgeons and constant development and evolution of the Neurosurgical School in Romania. His whole activity lies on the shrine of this extraordinary discipline of neurosurgery as he practically had no time for any other activity or his family.

Dedication, strength and tenacity are the three keywords of Prof. Alexandru Constantinovici's life. A symbol of constant dedication and painstaking routine, he always sought to push Romanian neurosurgery to the highest level, thus recovering as much lost time as possible since Romania cut ties with the West in 1947.

After graduating medical school in Bucharest in 1952 he began his activity as a surgeon with a prodigal early career at the "Colentina" Hospital of Bucharest. He later embraced the field of neurosurgery becoming a consultant in 1970 and joining the ranks of university lecturers in Bucharest. He passed through every academic rank and was appointed Professor of Neurosurgery in 1991, the same year he was appointed Chief of the largest neurosurgical hospital – a challenge passed forward by Professor Constantin Arseni.

The scientific and professional activity of Professor Constantinovici encompassed every possible subspecialty (both in cranial and spinal neurosurgery). He was concerned with introducing novel paraclinical investigations such as the use of radioactive isotopes in the diagnosis of cerebral and spinal lesions. In this respect he was a vocal promoter of the new field of nuclear medicine and he is credited with the first use of nuclear medicine in neurosurgery in Romania. He was the first promoter of trans-sphenoidal surgery for pituitary tumors in Romania.

The same year he was appointed professor and chief of neurosurgery in Bucharest, he was voted president of the Romanian Society of Neurosurgery. After 2 mandates as president he became honorary president and developed a very wide field of scientific activity in country and abroad, thus crucially contributing at the

construction and development of the Romanian journal of Neurosurgery – „Romanian Neurosurgery”. Since 1991 Professor Constantinovici was the first one to adopt English as a mandatory language in the entire Romanian neurosurgical meme, thus delicately forcing Romanian neurosurgeons to rally to western standards.

Professor Constantinovici participated on behalf of Romania at countless conferences, symposiums and international congresses, especially those organized by the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies and the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies. As one of his closest collaborators I have served under him in 1993 at the WFNS Congress in Acapulco, a vital moment for Romanian neurosurgery as worldwide recognition was attained.

An essential element in Prof. Constantinovici’s activity was represented by the international acceptance of the Romanian school of neurosurgery through its capability of training neurosurgeons capable of covering the most demanding positions.



The scientific activity of prof. Alexandru Constantinovici MD was prodigious, realizing over 200 scientific papers, presented and published in specialized journals. We also mention the 16 monographs/treaties, in which his contribution was major, as the main author or in collective. Last but not least, we reveal the opening of the so thorny fields of pituitary tumors pathology through transfenoidal approach and radioisotopic methods in the diagnosis of nervous system disorders.

Prof. Constantinovici attained numerous distinctions in his activity and developed professional relationships with numerous colleagues throughout the world. His 16 published monographs are present even today in the national neurosurgical heritage. In 1982 he became a corresponding member of the „American Academy of Neurological Surgeons” – the most prestigious neurosurgical society at the time. He was admitted in 1993 in the French speaking neurosurgical society. In 1995 he became a full member of the „Romanian Academy of Medical Sciences”.

Under his leadership Romanian neurosurgery gained a new aura, a modern drive and a never stopping lust for knowledge in all possible fields: pituitary diseases, vascular neurosurgery, surgical treatment of epilepsy, neuroendoscopy and last but not least, neurosurgical applications of nuclear medicine.

Unfortunately, his activity came to a sudden halt in 1999 when, for personal reasons, he decided to pass the torch along – while at full health and professional maturity – choosing to deal with the scientific

constructive issues of neurosurgery and covering less the surgical aspects of neurosurgery. For all those who knew him Prof. Constantinovici was a symbol of friendship, attachment and dedication in all possible situations ranging from difficult times in the operating room up to issues concerning family life.

The authors wish to express their empathy for the mourning relatives. We will never forget his warm smile and his wise words.

Has passed into eternity a neurosurgical personality, an accomplished colleague, a surgeon who was a trainer and a creator in the neurosurgical field.

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