

NON OMNIS MORIAR

IN MEMORIAM OF PROFESSOR KAZIMIERZ JAŚKIEWICZ (1942-2009)

Professor Kazimierz Jaśkiewicz MD, PhD was born on 2 March 1942 in Lachowicze near Nowogródek (Lithuania). In 1959–1966, he studied medicine at the Medical Academy in Gdańsk where he obtained his medical degree in 1966. Already as a student he started scientific work. In 1970–1980, when working for the Department of Pathomorphology of the Medical Academy in Gdańsk, he conducted classes, carried out scientific work and trained to be an anatomopathologist. In 1976, on the grounds of his doctoral dissertation entitled *Chronic Myocarditis Due to Infection by Coxsackie B3 Virus and Treatment Attempts* he was awarded the degree of the Doctor of Medical Sciences, and then passed a specialization examination in pathomorphology.

In 1980, he left Poland; in 1980–1984, he was employed as a pathologist in the Research Laboratory in the Mont Park Hospital, Melbourne, Australia, and in 1984–1988, in the Monash National Research Institute for Nutritional Disease MRC, Cape Town, Republic of South Africa, as a pathology scientific officer. In 1988–1995, he was an academic teacher and pathology consultant at the Department of Pathology, Cape Town University Medical School, Republic of South Africa, where he was awarded his Ph.D. degree in 1990 and the Associated Professor's post in 1991.

In 1994, he returned to Poland and took up work in his home medical school at the Department of Pathomorphology of the Medical Academy in Gdańsk. In 1999, on the basis of the scientific output and habilitation dissertation entitled *Esophageal Cancer in the Epidemiological, Etiopathogenetic, Cyto- and Histoclinical Aspect* he was awarded a degree of the Doctor Habilitated in Medical Sciences in the field of pathomorphology. From 2002 he acted as the Head of the Chair and Department of Pathomorphology of the Gdańsk Medical University. In 2001–2006, he was also the Head of the Department of Pathology of the Medical Academy in Gdańsk Clinical Hospital. In 2005, he became a professor of the Medical Academy in Gdańsk, and a professor in 2008.

The scientific output of Professor Kazimierz Jaśkiewicz includes about 200 scientific articles, numerous convention reports and chapters in textbooks. This output is significant: it is of great practical importance and makes a creative and valuable contribution to the development of pathomorphology. The Professor's scientific interests were wide, including



cardiopathology, alimentary tract pathology, hepatopathology as well as respiratory tract and breast pathology. Numerous papers were presented by Professor Jaśkiewicz at national and foreign congresses and conventions. The total Impact Factor of articles published is more than 220 points. Professor Jaśkiewicz was the first or the only author of 70 publications.

The papers from the 1970s concerning infections by Coxsackie virus and the pathogenesis of post-inflammatory cardiomyopathy enabled elaboration of the experimental model of an acute and chronic viral myocarditis and post-inflammatory cardiomyopathy and were used for research on their experimental treatment. Those papers were at that time unique and even after years aroused interest of Professor Christian Barnard's research group in the Transplantation Centre (UCT) in Cape Town. It is there where Professor Jaśkiewicz carried out his research concerning morphology and aetiology of cardiomyopathy and determination of the types of heart transplant rejections. Then, in the Liver Research Centre (UCT) in Cape Town he worked on the pathomechanisms of transplant rejection, regeneration, characteristics of the liver stem cell, liver fibrosis, blood flow disorders, portal hypertension and molecular pathology of liver cancer.

Another sphere of the Professor's scientific interests was the pathology of alimentary tract. Together with the clinical groups he conducted research on the malabsorption syndrome and the pathology of upper alimentary tract mucosa inflammation due to *Helicobacter pylori*, especially precursor changes and early alimentary tract cancer. He worked on epidemiology, etiopathogenesis, diagnostics and experimental aspects of esophageal and gastric carcinoma. Professor Jaśkiewicz worked out a special capsule for esophageal mucosa swabbing and with the help of the capsule examined a group of several hundred patients. Epidemiologic studies mainly concerned the natives of various regions of South Africa, showing that the differences between the risk of the incidents of esophageal carcinoma and liver carcinoma depend on many coexisting factors such as nutrition, fungoid superinfection, antioxidant concentration and certain microelements in blood.

In the recent years the Professor's research interests were focused on the problems of fibrogenesis and angiogenesis in inflammations and

neoplasms as well as examining the pathogenesis and molecular prognostic factors in breast, pulmonary and colonic carcinoma. Some articles were devoted to colitis.

Professor Jaśkiewicz was a committed teacher, educator of medical doctors specializing in pathomorphology, manager of 5 specialization internships in this field and supervisor of 4 doctoral dissertations. He was a friend of students and young scientific staff, a respected consultant and authority. As a travelling professor he delivered lectures in Naples, Louvain, Frankfurt, Leipzig and Tripoli.

For his special scientific achievements Professor Jaśkiewicz received the Kruger Gold Award of the Republic of South Africa Gastroenterology Society for the research on the early diagnostics of esophageal carcinoma (1987), a couple of team awards from The Liver Research Centre for research on idiopathic liver portal fibrosis and for research on the liver stem cell and liver regeneration (1991-1993), and in addition, the first degree team award of the Rector of the Medical Academy in Gdańsk for research on the significance of the selected apoptosis regulator and the cell growth cycle in non-small cell lung cancer (2006).

For more than 30 years he was the fellow of the Polish Society of Pathologists, and from 2003 the chairman of the Gdańsk Branch of the Polish Society of Pathologists. In 1990, on the basis of the examinations passed and the original scientific output he was admitted to the Royal College of Pathologists in London, and in 2003 he obtained the Certificate of Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists.

Prof. dr hab. med. Kazimierz Jaśkiewicz died after a serious disease on 24 September 2009. He was buried at the "Srebrzysko" Cemetery in Gdańsk. We were abandoned by the man who was modest and of a generous heart, a professor, friend, teacher, consultant, prolific scientist, kind manager to his staff, a hard working and responsible man fanatically involved in his profession and constantly broadening his great knowledge. Even when lying on his deathbed in hospital he kept and read, as long as he could, monographs in the field of pathology. What was most important for Professor Jaśkiewicz was honest work, the work of a medical diagnostician bearing huge responsibility for diagnosing the patient's illness and recommending treatment. His numerous journeys and life on three continents made him know and understand many cultures. He loved classical music and his additional passion was tourism. What mattered for Professor Jaśkiewicz was a human being and his problems, a patient whom he diagnosed as well as a lost student, a young doctor, an employee or a specialist with some diagnostic problem. He never refused his help.

The extraordinary man passed away and the void he left will be filled with our memories of him. We will remember him as a wonderful man, recognized scientist and devoted teacher.

Ewa Iżycka-Świeszewska

On behalf of members of the Polish Society of Pathologists,
Gdańsk Branch