
Editorial

Celebrating the 70th Birthday of Prof. Momir Polenakovic

Goce Spasovski

Department of Nephrology, Medical Faculty, University of Skopje, R.Macedonia



Prof. Dr. Momir Polenakovic, one of the founders of the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO), which was formed in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, in 1993, Associate Editor of the BANTAO journal, is now 70 years old, extremely active in all the work of the BANTAO Association, as well as in the nephrology association in his own country, the Republic of Macedonia.

He was a President of the BANTAO Association and he organized two BANTAO Congresses: in 1997 in Struga and in 2005 in Ohrid. In this period, he and his nephrologist colleagues made a great effort and established BANTAO as the major forum of Balkan nephrologists, indicating their will to communicate, to collaborate, to get to know each other and to share their difficulties. More than a professional event, the BANTAO Congresses have become a cultural phenomenon, through which the members realize that they have many more things in common than had previously been thought, and that they must take every advantage of being able to live and to communicate in a world without political boundaries. Till now, the BANTAO Council has managed in a spirit of peace, friendship and collaboration to continuously strengthen this association and, moreover, to make it a reputable part of the European and international associations. We very much appreciate the effort and contribution of Dr. Polenakovic to the development of the BANTAO Association and nephrology in the Balkans.

Momir Polenakovic was born in Skopje in 1939. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of

Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, in 1963, and subsequently received his training in internal medicine, nephrology at the Faculty of Medicine and abroad. In 1977 he completed his PhD studies on the immunological aspect of glomerulonephritis. In 1988 he was elected a regular Professor at the Medical Faculty in Skopje, and he was Director of the Department for Nephrology for the period 1990-97. He was further educated and conducted research in well-known centres in Europe and the USA. In the period 1972-73 he was an IREX Fellow at the Departments of Internal Medicine and Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago, USA with Professors Jennings, Potter and Ivanovich, where he studied nephroimmunopathology. During that period he visited the Scipps Clinic at the University of San Diego, as well as the Harvard Medical School Renal Unit. He was also a Fellow at Guy's Hospital London, in the Renal Unit (Prof. Cameron) in 1977, and in 1983 a fellow of the WHO in Munich with Prof. Gurland, in London and in Stockholm. He collaborated continuously with Prof. Klinkmann from Rostock, Germany, and with German colleagues. As a Fulbright Visiting Professor in Chicago, USA, in 1991-92, he studied different membranes in dialysis with Prof. P. Ivanovich and polycystic kidney disease with Prof. F. Carone. During that time he was a lecturer at the Medical Faculty in Los Angeles, Baylor College Houston, and the National Institute of Health. In 1999 he was in Aachen, Germany, for 4 months, where he was conducting research into dialysis with Prof. H. Mann. He was very active in ISN, ERA-EDTA, ESAO (a Governor for 8 years) and has participated in the work of many congresses and scientific meetings in Europe and around the world.

He passed on the knowledge he acquired during his education and research abroad in the Department of Nephrology at the Medical Faculty in Skopje, the Republic of Macedonia, and with his colleagues he built a strong nephrology network in the Republic of Macedonia. He participated in and supported the development of different methods of blood purification (dialysis, since 1966, plasmapheresis), the introduction of treatment with erythropoietin and with the immunosuppressive drug for immune nephropathies. He introduced renal biopsy and made the classification of glomerulonephritis in the Republic of Macedonia. He partici-

Correspondence to:

Goce Spasovski, Department of Nephrology, University of Skopje, R. Macedonia;
Tel/Fax.: +3892 3231 501; Email: gpas@sonet.com.mk

pated in the performance of the first renal transplantation in the Republic of Macedonia in 1977. Momir Polenakovic educated a great number of medical doctors in internal medicine, nephrology and was the mentor for PhD studies for many postgraduate students. Under his leadership, a great collective of nephrologists was established, many of whom became professors. Momir Polenakovic participated in a number of national and international research projects and together with his colleagues has published the results in a number of scientific papers in domestic and foreign journals. He organized a number of scientific meetings and congresses in the Republic of Macedonia, with the participation of many distinguished foreign scientists who passed on their knowledge of nephrology to their colleagues from the Republic of Macedonia and the Balkans.

Prof. Polenakovic established and has been the President of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs since 1992. He was elected President of the Macedonian Medical Association (1984-86), and President of the Yugoslav Society of Nephrology (1985-89).

His work has been recognized and he has received many national and international recognitions and awards. Prof. Polenakovic was elected a Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (1994), a Member of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (1997), an Honorary Member of the Bureg Foundation, Varna, R. Bulgaria (1995), an Honorary Member of the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology (1995), a Member of the Academia Scientiarum Medicarum Croatica (2002), a Member of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences (2006), a Member of the Academia Scientiarum et Artium Europaea (2006) and a Member of the Leibniz-Sozietat der Wissenschaften zu Berlin E.V.

Prof. Polenakovic is the recipient of the Distinguished International Medal for 1997 of the National Kidney Foundation (USA), the highest honour granted by the

National Kidney Foundation to non-United States nephrologists for distinguished scientific achievements in nephrology and for outstanding public service to their renal community.

Prof. Polenakovic is the Editor in Chief of *Prilozi* (proceedings of the Section of Biological and Medical Sciences) at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (since 2002), Associate Editor of the BANTAO Journal; a Member of the Advisory Board of the Actual Nephrology: Kidney Foundation, Varna, Bulgaria; a Member of the Advisory Board of *Aktualnost v nefrologii* (Current Concepts in Nephrology), Czech Republic; a Member of the Advisory Board of *Medical Data*, Serbia; and a Former Member of the Advisory Board of *Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation* (NDT), and *JAMA* (Journal of American Medical Association): Yugoslav Edition.

Momir Polenakovic has devoted his life to his patients, to research into kidney disease, to the treatment of patients with kidney disease and to the development of nephrology in his own country and abroad. He has always been humane, with an open heart and an understanding of the problems of his patients and with the good will to help them as much as possible. He was a good teacher of his students and his colleagues and always willing to help them to find the right way and the truth in the treatment of patients and scientific research. He has a great many friends around the world.

On behalf of the BANTAO Editorial Board and on behalf of the colleagues of the Republic of Macedonia we wish him a long life, good health and fruitful work.

Prof. Goce Spasovski

Deputy Editor of the BANTAO Journal

Secretary General of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs