

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

COL. (retd.) Professor JOSEF FUSEK, MD, DrSc., dr. h. c. LAUDATIO

*Time is running,
May is coming,
Life is springing,
The world is singing.*



...Professor Josef Fusek, a vital personality closely bound to military medicine through toxicology and pharmacology, not only in the Czech Republic but all over the globe, celebrates his 70th birthday.

Josef Fusek was born on May 12th, 1945, in Vienna, Austria. After the return of his parents to Czechoslovakia, he grew up in the Ostrava region where he attended primary and secondary school. After leaving school in 1962, he decided to study medicine as a military student at the J. E. Purkinje Military Medical Academy and Medical Faculty of Charles University, in Hradec Králové. He graduated with a first-class degree in medicine in July,

1968, and in September, 1968, started working as Assistant in the Dept. of Toxicology at the Academy. In 1973, he obtained his 1st Accreditation in internal medicine; in 1975, he completed a thesis, subsequently qualifying as Associate Professor, later, in 1984. He obtained the highest scientific degree of Doctor of Science in 1990, and in 1991, he was nominated University Professor. On an international level, Colonel Professor Fusek was awarded the title Doctor Honoris Causa of the Military Medical Academy in Łódź, Poland, in 1999.

Josef Fusek's scientific work began during his student years: since this beginning, his activities have been connected with pharmacology and toxicology. In 1968, his first Papers on pharmacological effects of anticholinergics were published not only in Czech but also in foreign scientific journals. The Papers dealt with the pharmacological effects of different drugs on the acetylcholine receptors of a rat's duodenum. These studies were extended to cover various pharmacological reactions in other organs, including the effects of chemical warfare agents (CWA) and their antidotes on physiological functions in experimental animals. These included not only rodents but also Beagle dogs. His achievements in this field provided a substantial contribution to the study and introduction of antidotes such as CHONOL I, II, FOSAN, RENOL, PANPAL and ANTIVA and their possible application in the Czech Armed Forces. Later, with an increase in military interest in the science of incapacitation-agents, he focused on the most significant of these, the BZ agent. Any antidote to the effects of BZ (except the relatively toxic drug physostigmine) was not yet known. Then Professor Fusek participated in the final phase of work on the specific antidote to the BZ which was the 7-methoxy-tacrine (7-MEOTA). Thus, he became known as a principal creator of this antidote which was incorporated into the arsenal of the Czech Armed Forces.

Josef Fusek has always been very enthusiastic in his scientific work. It was therefore no surprise when he became one of six volunteers for the first clinical testing of this newly-developed drug. His scientific reputation resulted in an invitation

to become the main contributor to a chapter on BZ in the “Handbook of Toxicology of Chemical Warfare Agents“ (2009). In its second edition (2015), he also contributed as co-author to another four chapters. The high quality of his work was recognized through the many invitations to scientific meetings, as guest-speaker, taking place in such countries as France, Germany, Israel, Sweden, Switzerland, USA. Other than these scientific activities, he studied and published important results of his work on anaesthesia in general, and especially in relation to the effects of CWA on anaesthesia.

His publication-rate is admirable. Josef Fusek is author/co-author of more than 300 publications in Czech and foreign journals; his Papers are frequently cited to the extent of making him one of the most cited authors of the Faculty. He also published around 30 books/book-chapters. Additionally, he is the presenter of more than 250 lectures and author of tens of final research-reports and reviews. Prof. Fusek has been the main researcher or co-ordinator of various projects at both national and international level.

Besides his specific scientific research- and teaching-activities, the varied organizational work of Prof. Fusek should be mentioned, too. He has organized many national and international meetings in Hradec Králové, e.g. the TG-004 NATO meeting, and the 6th Czech and Slovak Toxicological Conference, which included an International Symposium on CWA. This last was attended by experts from France, Germany, Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, and the USA, to mention a few.

Being a founder-member and serving for many years as Science Secretary of the Society of Military Physicians, Pharmacists and Veterinarians of the J.E. Purkinje Czech Medical Association, he organized most of the annual conferences of the Society.

COL. Prof. Fusek’s meritorious role continued into the most recent history of the Czech Armed Forces, the Czech Military Medical Corps and the entire educational system. In the early 1990s, he became the first elected Rector of the Purkinje Military Medical Academy. Under his mature, wise leadership, the Academy achieved stability and has now been transformed into a modern military university within the new national socio-economic framework. His successful work was confirmed, among other honours, by his re-election as Rector of the Academy for a second term (1994-97).

It is not possible to annotate within the confines of this text a complete list of life-achievements. However, we all know where, when and how Professor Fusek has contributed to the professional metabolism of our department, School, Medical Corps and general military medicine. We sincerely hope he will also succeed in enjoying a satisfyingly fruitful next chapter in his life.

Distinguished Professor, dear Jožka, thank you for your most unselfish, enormously beneficial work on behalf of the military-medical and scientific community. We all wish you good health and happiness in the following years.

Ad multōs annōs!



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