

EDITORIAL**THE MEMORY OF PROFESSOR VALERIU RUSU, M.D., Ph.D.,
GUIDING LIGHT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR IMAGING
DOMAIN: TEN YEARS OF A FULFILLED LEGACY IN THE FIELD
OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE AT IASI**

It has already passed, as if in an instant, ten years since the premature disappearance of the distinguished Professor Valeriu Rusu M.D., Ph.D., the mentor of nuclear medicine in Iasi. Many things remain encrypted in his mind, an unwritten encyclopedia, which gone, unfortunately, with the being. But there are also many essential things that have remained here, with us, through the school he formed around him.

The master's words are our legacy: *"I have other projects, also, but their completion does not depend only on me... I don't know if time will be patient"*. And even if time ran out of patience, unfairly quickly, the teacher's words turned into a duty of honor for the collaborators he trained, professionally and morally, and the Professor's projects were and are being carried forward, developed and successfully completed.

The Nuclear Medicine Laboratory *"Professor Valeriu Rusu, M.D., Ph.D."* currently bears his name and keeps his memory alive. It could not have been otherwise, because it was developed and formed by the great professor to be the place where, from the whole country, all SPECT vector molecules imported into Romania are always used the most and the newest techniques in the field of nuclear imaging are introduced, for the final benefit of the patient.

It was a difficult 10 years period for the laboratory which initially, through the immense effort of the Professor, was equipped

with two SPECT gamma camera devices, innovative for the endowment years, 1990-2000, which allowed it to develop important projects and publications in the field, at a level that quickly brought the Iasi university center to first place in the country in the field of functional imaging research, devices that, obviously, would wear out physically and morally in over 20 years. There followed memos upon memos, attempts, often unsuccessful, repeated with the perseverance learned from the mentor, so that, in the end, they were successful in renewing the equipment to world standards.

The laboratory has developed and, today, is equipped, as a result of a project co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund through the Competitiveness Operational Program 2014-2020, with the only SPECT-CT gamma camera in our university center and one of the 2 in Moldova; along with a SPECT gamma camera, maintained with seriousness and care by the laboratory staff, as the teacher taught us, currently used for Pediatric Nephrology - the center being the only one in the country where the use of functional imaging for the benefit of pediatric nephrology pathology is developed at international standards. Within the laboratory, the first center in the country was established, which aims to use artificial intelligence for the benefit of precision medicine, starting from imaging data, MEDIMAG IA (Regional Center of Excel-

lence for Personalized Diagnosis and Artificial Intelligence in Medicine and Imaging), which creates the premises for international collaborations that will contribute both to increasing the visibility of our university and of region, for the final benefit of the patient.

These are standards that keep nuclear medicine from our university center where our master taught us that it should be: a spearhead in fundamental and applied research in the field of nuclear imaging in our country and in understanding images through biophysical uptake mechanisms of radiopharmaceuticals, according to the French model - the most logical model, France being the country where the professor completed his professional training, through the famous governmental scholarship, Bourse de Collège de Médecine des Hôpitaux de Paris, and where he, later, guided the steps of 3 collaborators, 2 of them currently continuing in the field, demonstrating care for the formation of a school of nuclear medicine that will continue the development of the field, in Iasi. It remains, even currently, the laboratory with the most teaching staff in the field, in the country and one of the only 2 centers in the country that coordinate doctoral studies.

As a result of all these arguments, starting from the foundations created by the Professor and through the openness that the “Grigore T. Popa” University of Medicine and Pharmacy from Iasi and the “Sf. Spiridon” County Clinical Emergency Hospital had in encouraging this action, Iasi is currently the only university center where functional imaging is the nucleus around which the only cluster dedicated to medical imaging in the country has developed, the IMA-GO-MOL Cluster, which militates, together with University and through the collabora-

tion of over 70 members (universities, research institutes, private members), for increasing the visibility of nuclear imaging in synchronism with artificial intelligence, through European projects and publications in prestigious journals, and through international collaborations, starting with student exchanges from the most distant countries (such as Brazil, Mexico or Japan), through involvement in international scientific consortia.

We would not have succeeded in fulfilling this duty of honor, regarding the endowment at world standards, in one year, as long as the project lasted, if we had not learned from our mentor the seriousness of a job well done, tenacity and perseverance doubled by professionalism, teamwork based on communication and mutual respect, surrounded in a formative way by young specialists, students, residents, PhD students in the domain, the openness to collaboration with the applied fields of nuclear imaging and, perhaps most importantly, the professional enthusiast... all representing the legacy of the soul that the Professor left us.

The same legacy can be found in another field dear to the Master – “*The Medical-Surgical Journal of the Society of Doctors and Naturalists from Iasi*”, the oldest medical society in South-Eastern Europe. It is the place where Professor Valeriu Rusu was the Editor in Chief, for 20 years (1994-2014), of the first medical journal in Romania (1833), marking, for sure, in a positively determining way, the development of the journal. Here, the periodic meetings of the Editorial Board represented, at the same time, real lessons in critical medical reading, particularly valuable for the young part of the Editorial staff; it is also the place that has often been a silent witness to some tasty discus-

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sions full of intellectual contortionism between great masters from the medical world, discussion partners of the master, discussions watched with looks full of professional enthusiasm by the other members of the collective.

The brilliance achieved by the fields he touched explains, without a doubt, what was so special in the personality of Professor Valeriu Rusu, what attracted and conquered the hundreds of students who filled his amphitheatres and all those who knew him, from where the “aura” of the so respected and beloved teacher came from.

All of them were the expression of his personality: an erudite, an encyclopedic mind that managed to give sparkle to the fields he developed, positively marking their evolution even beyond passing into non-existence. Seriousness + extreme self-demand = Professionalism, to which the teacher gave color through professional enthusiasm developed in a philosophically erudite manner, this was his essence, which he managed to induce to those he mentored, also. Because, above all, the teacher remains a great lover of the profession of educator and trainer of the minds of the many students, Ph.D. students and young specialists whom he mentored.

A righteous teacher, who was only sometimes, influenced by his own heart, a teacher who managed to find the way to the misunderstood part of each of his students, chiseling, sometimes demanding, but always with exceptional results, their skills for medical research.

Even if time ran out of patience and the Professor left us too soon, he will remain alive in our memory, of those he guided and mentored and of all those who knew him, and through the fulfillment of the projects he had. Our mentor’s projects have become the moral duty that we always try to carry out and to develop in an innovative and formative way, for those who will follow and, always, for the final benefit of the patient.

At every step, the teacher’s words and memory remained our guiding light.

He looks at us from the painting on the wall of the Nuclear Medicine Laboratory, and seems to be smiling slightly, we hope satisfied with what has been achieved so far, but, as if also a bit admonitory, to take care to tirelessly continue the development of nuclear imaging, of the laboratory whose value he cherished and shepherded her all his life and of all other fields that he loved so much.

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