

Obituary

Nickolay Alexandrovich Torsuev, M.D.

1902-1978



Professor Torsuev, one of the leading leprologists of the USSR, who was also a member of the WHO Expert Committee on Leprosy, died on May 6, 1978.

Professor Torsuev was born on December 13, 1902 in Gorky (the former Nizhny Novgorod). He graduated in medicine from Novgorod University in 1925 and began his career as a dermato-venereologist. In 1932 he became a teacher at the Chair of Skin and Venereal Diseases of the Gorky Medical Institute, and thereafter headed the chairs of skin and venereal disease of the medical institutes in Simferopol (1937-1944), Rostov-on-Don (1944-1961), and Donetsk (1961-1976). In September of 1976 he was appointed as professor-consultant at the Chair of Skin and Venereal Diseases of the Donetsk Medical Institute (the Ukraine).

Professor Torsuev was a prominent clinician, dermatologist, leprologist, experienced teacher and eminent scientist. His medical and scientific interests were many and varied. He published over 700 scientific works including 24 monographs and a textbook of skin and venereal diseases for medical students. Under his guidance, 70 theses were completed. Early in his scientific activities, he was engaged in studies on occupational skin diseases. In addition to the series of articles devoted to dermatoses caused by nickel salts, chrome compounds, sodium cyanide, lubricators, etc., he published a comprehensive bibliography on this subject in 1934.

He achieved a much deserved success in investigating the problems of innervation of normal and damaged skin. His thesis "The Nerves of Skin and Histiocyte (Barrier) Response in Some Dermatoses" (1938) was

awarded a special prize from the Moscow Society of Dermatologists. Many of Torsuev's articles were devoted to the questions of skin and venereal disease control, etiology and pathogenesis of various dermatoses, and history of dermatology and venereology.

The first article on leprosy by Torsuev appeared in 1931, and since that time he spent his scientific efforts investigating the different problems surrounding leprosy. In his studies, he dealt with the epidemiology of leprosy, its classification and differential diagnosis, treatment and prophylaxis. He studied the different aspects of pathogenesis, early manifestations of the disease, and comparisons between murine and human leprosy. In total he published about 230 articles on leprosy, the most important being: "Leprosy," a guide for medical practitioners (1951-1952); "The History of Leprosy Classification," a monograph (1956); "Leprosy in the Former Russian Empire" (1958); "Brief Reference Book on Leprosy Control" (1958); "Recognition and Differential Diagnosis of Leprosy" (1971).

Due to Professor Torsuev's initiative and energy, a clinico-experimental leprosarium was founded in Rostov-on-Don in 1947 which he headed until 1960 (it closed in 1970). In this role he played a great part in training doctors and scientists; and during this period, under his guidance, a great number of scientific research projects were performed and 23 collections of scientific works on leprology and dermatology were published.

He was an honored member of 13 dermatological societies, a member of the International Association of Tropical Diseases and the International Leprosy Association, a member of editorial boards of many medical publications which included the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY, CASTELLANIA and VESTNICK DERMATOLOGII I VENEROLOGII. He also took part in preparing the Fourth Report of the WHO Expert Committee on Leprosy (1970). For his dedicated work in the

field of medical sciences and health services, Professor Torsuev was awarded several honorary titles, "Meritorious Science Worker," "Meritorious Physician," as well as several government rewards.

Nickolay Alexandrovich Torsuev, specialist, scientist and teacher, will always be remembered by his students, friends and colleagues.

—A. JUSCENKO, M.D., Director
V. SHUBIN, M.D., Former Director
V. LOGINOV, M.D.

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Note: As contributing editor to this JOURNAL, Dr. Torsuev was very helpful both with respect to volunteered contributions and requests for information and assistance. Those concerned with the production of the JOURNAL will sorely miss this friend and colleague.—Olaf K. Skinsnes, M.D.