INFORMATION

JOINT MEETING OF NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ACADEMY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES OF UKRAINE DEVOTED TO THE CENTENARY OF R.E. KAVETSKY

СОВМЕСТНОЕ ЗАСЕДАНИЕ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ АКАДЕМИИ НАУК УКРАИНЫ И АКАДЕМИИ МЕДИЦИНСКИХ НАУК УКРАИНЫ, ПОСВЯЩЕННОЕ 100–ЛЕТИЮ СО ДНЯ РОЖДЕНИЯ Р.Е. КАВЕЦКОГО

A joint meeting of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) of Ukraine was held in Kyiv in December 1, 1999, in tribute to the centenary of Rostislav E. Kavetsky, the eminent oncologist and pathophysiologist.

An introductory speech was delivered by the NAS President, academician Boris Paton who highlighted the milestones of R. Kavetsky's life and scientific career:

R. Kavetsky was born in 1899 in Samara, Russia. Having graduated from the medical faculty of Samara University in 1925, he did his postgraduate work in pathophysiology under the guidance of famous Ukrainian pathophysiologist Alexander Bogomoletz. R. Kavetsky's development as a researcher was influenced strongly by his teacher, and he expanded upon A. Bogomoletz's ideas throughout his life. R. Kavetsky received his D. Sci. degree in medicine in 1937, the title of professor — in 1938. After serving as medical officer of the Soviet Army from 1942 to 1944, R. Kavetsky returned to Kiev and was appointed a director of the Institute for Clinical Physiology. In 1954 he became an Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. From 1960 until his death, R. Kavetsky headed the Kiev Research Institute of Experimental and Clinical Oncology, later having been reorganized into the Institute of Experimental Pathology, Oncology and Radiobiology.

The scientific activities of Prof. R. Kavetsky touched on a wide range of problems in pathophysiology and experimental oncology. He was a forerunner in developing the concept of tumor–host interaction. Even his earliest publications, from 1927 to 1935, were devoted to the studies of metabolism in tumor and host, the pathogenetic mechanisms of cachexia, and the role of the host defense in malignant tumor growth. He was especially interested in the reactions of the connective tissue preceding or promoting the development of malignant tumors.

R. Kavetsky summarized his research on the role of connective tissue reactivity in tumor growth in his monograph "The Role of the Active Mesenchyma In the Host Disposition to Malignant Tumors" (Kiev, 1938). At this time, he also became the first to use the Bogomoletz's antireticular cylotoxic sera in clinics.

Kavetsky's laboratory at the Institute of Physiology showed that the weakened functioning of the nervous system reduced the antitumor resistance of the host. These results were summarized in the monograph, "The Tumor Process and the Nervous System" (Kiev, 1954; New York, 1962).

In 1954 R. Kavetsky put forward the concept of tumor–host interactions which was further elaborated at the VIIIth International Cancer Congress in Moscow in 1962 as well as in his book "The Tumor and Host" (Kiev, 1962) where the main aspects of such interactions were examined in details. The results of further research on the suibject obtained at the Institute were later summarized in a monograph, "Host and Tumor Interaction" (Kiev, 1977). It is greatly to R. Kavetsky's credit that the majority of oncologists now regard a tumor as a disease rather than as a local process.

In his last years, R. Kavetsky was mainly interested in anticarcinogenesis. His research in this field were aimed at the search of the means designed either for increasing the immune surveillance of the host or controlling cell division and differentiation.

For many years, Prof. Kavetsky was Vice–Chairman of the All–Union and Ukrainian Scientific Oncological Society. On his initiative, the Institute regularly hosted All–Union Conferences and Symposia.

R. Kavetsky published more than 400 works characterized by the novelty of ideas and research directions. The results of his experimental studies were also of high importance for the clinical practice.

In his speech B. Paton emphasized that the problems R. Kavetsky was engaged in are still in the focus of modern science. R. Kavetsky was an outstanding organizer of fundamental research in oncology and the person of inexhaustible creative abilities, having greatly contributed to the development of scientific knowledge in this field. His challenging scientific ideas are far from being fully explored up to the present.

A lot of personal memories of R. Kavetsky has been recollected in the speeches of the participants of the meeting. Academician Zoya Butenko has told the audience that R. Kavetsky was an excellent and careful teacher, having passed on his wide experience to his pupils. He was responsible for training numerous competent scientists, oncologists in particular. R. Kavetsky took his place among those non–ordinary and rare scientists who were famous not only by their own scientific achievements but also by scientific schools they had founded by themselves.

Director of the Institute, Prof. Vasili Chekhun has reported on the main scientific achievements, current research efforts, and the prospects of further research in the field of experimental oncology.

NAS and AMS corresponding member Alexander Reznikov highlighted the scientific contributions of R. Kavetsky as an eminent pathophysiologist and the specialist in theoretical medicine.

AMS Vice–President Yuri Kundiev emphasized that R. Kavetsky was also the man of great knowledge and intellectual penetration, the person of high moral standards. R. Kavetsky was a person of particular charm and modesty. His simplicity and cordiality to people regardless of title, rank, social status, or age won the hearts of those who knew him.

In his concluding remark B. Paton announced that in the tribute to Prof. R. Kavetsky the special award for the scientific achievements in the field of oncology is to be set up. Also R. Kavetsky grants allocated to the most talented postgraduate students and young researchers of the Institute founded by R. Kavetsky and named after him are to be established.

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