OBITUARY

PROF. DR HAB. MED. ANDRZEJ CENCORA
(1938-2008)

Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Cencora, M.D. died in Cracow on 21 June 2008. He passed away after almost two-months struggle with disease that took Him by surprise when He was traveling to the 3rd Congress of Vascular Societies in Mi-Kolajki. We tried to persuade Professor not to attend the Congress because he was not well, but unsuccessfully. He promised his friends and students to chair a session and He kept his promises. Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Cencora, M.D. was born in Lwów on 29 July 1938 in a medical family. Lwów was his beloved city, He always mentioned this city with warmth. Probably the only songs that he ever sang and his beloved ones, were the Lvovian songs. Probably He inherited his passion for surgery from his father who was also a surgeon. As a seven-year old boy, He left Lwów. He briefly lived in Jaroslaw and then left with his parents for Cracow. He graduated from a grammar school and then 2nd Jan III Sobieski High School in Cracow. After graduation, he entered Medical Faculty of Medical Academy in Cracow. He graduated in 1963 and was employed at 3rd Chair and Clinic of Surgery of Cracovian Medical Academy. Prof. Mieczyslaw Politowski was the head of the clinic then who was known for his interest in multiple areas of surgery, including...
vascular surgery. Young medical doctor Andrzej Cencora was fascinated mainly by this area of surgery. 3rd Clinic of Surgery founded Laboratory of Blood Clotting, one of the first in Poland, and professor-to-be did his studies there. These studies resulted in a number of papers that were published in national and foreign scientific journals. In 1971 he defended his PhD thesis titled “Fibrynolysis of plasma euglobulin in patients with atherosclerosis of arteries of the lower extremities” and soon became an established expert in the field of coagulation. He had close contacts with prof. Stanisław Łopaciuk, a renowned expert in this field.

Since 1978 he was employed in Edmund Biernacki Hospital in Cracow; initially he was a senior assistant in Department of General Surgery, headed by Włodzimierz Jastrzębski, M.D., Ph.D. and in 1982 he became the head of Department of Vascular Surgery that had previously been headed by prof. Stefan Bąk – one of the pioneers of vascular surgery in Poland. Soon Andrzej Cencora turned out to be highly dynamic and well organized. His ambition was to transform the department of general and vascular surgery into a center dealing exclusively with vascular surgery. Due to Professor’s efforts, the department soon became a leading regional center and obtained a status of Provincial Department of Vascular Surgery. Andrzej Cencora employed young physicians at his department who started their professional career under his supervision. He required all his employees to expand their knowledge continuously, to write scientific papers and participate in scientific meetings. His motto was that a surgeon should be able to do more than just operate. Soon it resulted in multiple publications in national scientific journals and presentations at congresses. He was extremely scrupulous in his publications and always cared for proper Polish language, in his references He always tried not to omit Polish authors dealing with a particular problem. It is probably why in 1989 professor Rykowski asked him, PhD at this time, to write a chapter titled “Arterio-venous fistulas” to one of the first Polish modern textbooks of vascular disease. In 1991 he obtained his habilitation (while he was still not an employee of Medical Academy). His habilitation thesis titled: “Intestinal ischemia after reconstruction procedures of abdominal aorta” was the result of several years of investigations and was cited number of times both in Polish and foreign literature. He had numerous ideas, he often asked very controversial questions, such as: intermittent claudication: symptom or risk factor? That triggered stormy discussions. He promoted two-stage amputation that allowed to lower the amputation level. Prof. Cencora is an author of more than 120 scientific papers, more than 50 commentaries to papers published in Polish and foreign journals and 5 chapters of vascular surgery and angiology. He participated in approximately 80 scientific Polish and foreign meetings. He chaired or organized many meetings. He was the head of Provincial Department of Vascular Surgery until 2006 and then was appointed Head of Regional Center of Vascular Disease.

Concurrently with being employed in Szpital Bonifratrów in Cracow, in 2004 Prof. Cencora returned to Collegium Medicum of Jagiellonian University. He was the Head of Department of Vascular Disease in the Faculty of Healthcare. He was appointer professor of CMJU in 2005 and was appointed professor by the President of Republic of Poland in 2007. He was a deputy dean for general and financial matters and was a member of a permanent Senate Committee for property and finances of Jagiellonian University.

In the period of 1995 – 1997 He was a chairman of Cracovian Branch of Polish Surgical Society and concurrently a member of Executive Board of TCHP and in the period of 2000 – 2003 he was a representative of Polish Society of Vascular Surgery in European Society of Vascular Surgery. In 2003 he became vice-chairman of Polish Phlebological Society. He was an editor of many scientific journals and Editor-in-chief of the journal Leczenie Ran.

He was a promoter of seven PhD theses, organized and chaired specialization courses within Medical Center of Postgraduate Education as well as classes in the medical school for foreigners.

Since 1995 He was a provincial consultant for vascular surgery.

He had numerous nonmedical interests. He liked to travel but not only to admire the landscape – he mainly liked to witness the culture, architecture of old cities and paintings of great masters.
Despite numerous responsibilities, Professor Andrzej Cencora never forgot about his patients. He treated each of his patients with respect, always had time to talk and understand worries of his patients and tried to alleviate their suffering as well as he could.

Professor Andrzej Cencora will remain in our memory for always as someone exceptional, sensitive and opened to another’s needs and concurrently full of enthusiasm, buoyancy and everlasting willingness and determination to emphasize and cherish the true value.

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