

Prof. MUDr. Bohumil TICHÁČEK, DrSc. (1924–2006) has passed away



Prof. Ticháček was one of the leading representatives of post-war epidemiology and microbiology in our country. This distinguished scientist, pedagogue and organiser of public health services played a significant role in the development of modern epidemiological methodology and bringing this into practical research in the field of controlling the spread of certain diseases, disinfection, rodent control, pathogenicity and virulence of bacteria as well as in study into the causes of the growing share of originators with low pathogenicity in serious human diseases. The field of interest and scientific activities of Prof. Ticháček was however much wider. His background for scientific work was impressive: a deep specialist and theoretical basis, his inventiveness for involvement in the main development trends in the field of preventative medicine, knowledge of foreign languages, superb ability for informal communication, diligence and self-discipline.

He graduated at the Medical Faculty in Pilsen, which he entered in 1945 after returning from Totaleinsatz in Germany. After graduation in 1950 he entered the department of medical prevention and later the department of epidemiology at the Military Medical Academy in Hradec Králové. He left in 1958 for the Military Institute for Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology in Prague where he worked until he left the army in 1981. But he did not discontinue his relations with the department of epidemiology when he left the army, his professional contacts there lasting until the end of his life.

He earned the title of scientific graduate in 1959 and in 1965 was appointed assistant professor for the department of epidemiology after his inaugural dissertation. He gained the scientific title of Doctor of Science in 1975 after defending his diploma thesis on the topic of peracetic acid. He was appointed Professor of Epidemiology after the revolution in 1989.

Prof. Ticháček was very industrious in the field of publication and had a very wide field of coverage. A whole range of publications and monographs culminated in the work “Basics of Epidemiology”. The work was awarded the Josef Hlávka prize in 1997. His superb collection of work on the use of peracetic acid was especially useful for work in the field, contributing to a significant extent in the prevention of hospital infection of viral hepatitis type B.

During his extensive pedagogical activities, he devoted himself to selected chapters, in terms of his workplace at the Postgraduate Medical Institute and at The 3rd Medical Faculty of the Charles University in Prague, of epidemiological methodology, disinfection, organisation of hygiene services and concept for protection of generally binding regulations.

After leaving the army, he started work with the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (IHE), where he devoted his time to coordination of research and organisation of cooperation with field units of the hygiene service. From 1.1.1990 onwards, he was entrusted with management of the IHE and in June 1992 appointed as its director. He held this position until 1994. As a member of the scientific council of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic he also participated in the creation of a programme for development of the National Institute of Public Health in terms of the restructuring of preventative medicine and hygiene services that was being prepared. His scientific and above all his human qualities predestined him for success at work in important positions. His specialist professional competence was proverbial as well as his communication skills, application of ethical principles, respect for human rights and freedom of thought.

Apart from his scientific and pedagogical work, Prof. Ticháček was also active as the chairman of the Society for epidemiology and microbiology of the Jan Evangelista Purkyně Czech Medical Society, he was a specialist consultant for several medical publishing houses, editor in chief of the magazine “Czechoslovakian epidemiology, microbiology and immunology” and chairman of the editorial committee of the international magazine, Journal of Hygiene, Epidemiology, Microbiology and Immunology (JHEMI), which thanks to his efforts after 1989 successfully transformed into the new international magazine, the Central European Journal of Public Health. This new periodical published by the National Institute of Public Health in Prague was meant to reflect the changing role of the public health service throughout the world and in Central Europe as a result of the political and economic changes after 1989.

The work of Prof. Ticháček in the field of preventative medicine was awarded in 1986 with the J. E. Purkyně Medal – the highest medical award.

During interviews with Prof. Ticháček, one felt the depth of his contemplation, his wide insight, remarkable ability to understand the feelings of others with a high level of tolerance and understanding.

By the departure of Prof. MUDr. Bohumil Ticháček, DrSc. Epidemiology and preventative medicine in the Czech Republic has lost an important senior worker. All those who knew him have lost not only a specialist, but also a great teacher, friend and a valuable human being. Those who had the fortune to work with him appreciate his personal and human qualities, which influenced and formed their professional growth to a significant extent.

On behalf of colleagues, his pupils and members of Editorial Board of the Central European Journal of Public Health.

Miroslav Šplíňo
Roman Prymula
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