

In Memory of Professor Karim Vessal: How a Genius Physician Paved the Road for the Development of Clinical Radiology, Nuclear Medicine, Ultrasonography and Medical Physics

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Dr. Karim Vessal, MD, a well-known leader in the field of clinical radiology, a beloved physician-scientist and a professor of radiology at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, died on Feb 19, 2022, at the age of 89 in Shiraz. Professor Karim Vessal spent his life passionately devoting time to his multifaceted career. Born in Shiraz in 1933, upon completing primary and high schools in Shiraz, Dr. Vessal enrolled at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany and received his MD degree in 1957. He later studied physics and obtained a degree from the Berlin School of Science and Philosophy. Then his academic training was continued in radiology in Berlin University. In 1965, Dr. Vessal obtained the board certificate and practiced in Germany and England for a few years before returning to his hometown Shiraz, where he served as the head of Radiology Department.

Professor Vessal significantly contributed to the growth of science production over the past decades. “About 30 years ago, Dr. Vessal warned us that while approximately one percent of the global population live in Iran, our contribution to the global production of science was only about 0.1%” said Kamran Bagheri-Lankarani, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine, the Chairman of Health Policy Research Center, and the Minister of Health and Medical Education from 2005 until 2009. “So, he successfully started to establish and promote Iranian journals to remove this gap”, Lankarani said. It is worth noting that now with a 20-fold increase, Iran’s contribution to global science production has reached about 2% [1]. Lankarani believes that Vessal’s background in Physics helped him develop a better way of looking at medicine and radiology. “Dr. Vessal strongly believed that our research should be able to solve our real problems, so in his opinion, publishing lots of papers when there is no “problem solving” was only wasting time and energy” Lankarani added.

As feeling good about your country is associated with feeling good about your own life, Professor Karim Vessal believed that scientific meetings such as the Shiraz Geographic Congress promotes the national pride. “Considering the importance of paying sufficient attention to research problems which are planned to solve our local problems, Profes-

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sor Karim Vessal helped us to establish the annual Shiraz Geographic Congresses that continued for 18 years”, said Professor Seyed Ziaeddin Tabei, MD, a distinguished pathologist, the past chancellor of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (SUMS) and the chairman of the SUMS medical ethics department.

Professor Vessal was also a founding member of the Ionizing and Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection Research Center (INIRPRC) since 2009 and a permanent member of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Iran since 1992. He also significantly contributed in the establishment of the Archives of Iranian Medicine, a journal in English language that was affiliated to the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences and IJMS. He also served as the first editor-in-chief of the Journal of Biomedical Physics and Engineering (JBPE).

Dr. Shakibafard, MD, a distinguished radiologist at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences who was trained by Dr. Vassal and worked with him for many years believes that he had a special all-round scientific insight that set him apart from other people we know as a scientist or physician.

The Radiology, Nuclear Medicine and Medical Physics communities of Iran will miss Dr. Karim Vessal, the genius physician scientist, who inspired us with his brilliant mind, honesty and integrity. He will forever be remembered by the scientific community and his legacy and insightful observations that advanced our knowledge will live on.

Conflict of Interest

None

References

1. ISC. Iranian science production grows in both WoS and Scopus.2020. Available from: <https://isc.ac/en/news/1456/iranian-science-production-grows-in-both-wos-and-scopus>.