

## PAGES OF HISTORY

### History of Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy through its rectors

Gh. Ghidirim<sup>1</sup>, \*R. Scerbina<sup>1</sup>, Iu. Grossu<sup>2</sup>, A. Muravca<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nicolae Anestiadi Department of Surgery

<sup>2</sup>Nicolae Testemitsanu Department of Social Medicine and Sanitary Management

Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova

\*Corresponding author: romeo.scerbina@yahoo.com. Received October 13, 2015; accepted December 03, 2015

#### Abstract

**Background:** The authors present the history of Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy from the beginning, since the transfer of Leningrad Institute of Medicine No 1 in November 1945. Rectors: Ipatie Sorocean, Nicolai Harauzov, Leonid Ganul, Nicolae Starostenco, Nicolae Testemitsanu, Vasile Anestiadi, Leonid Cobaleanski, Ion Ababii are presented with a broad feature of their work – teaching, scientific, managerial. A particular attention is given to rectors academicians: Nicolae Testemitsanu, Vasile Anestiadi and current rector Ion Ababii. A decisive role in the development of the university belongs to Nicolae Testemitsanu, who was the first local rector to promote national staff, contributed to the opening of the faculties of Dentistry, Continuous Medical Education, Preventive Medicine and Pharmacy. He sent local staff for advanced studies to different USSR centers, who after returning occupied the positions of heads of departments and laboratories. Vasile Anestiadi continued the promotion of the university, which became one of the most prestigious medical institutions in the former Soviet Union. Ion Ababii, the current rector, has promoted the university applying European ideas, liaising with other universities of the same type, a strategic partnership with future effects. Thus, Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy reached the anniversary of 70 years, having an imposing history and a foreseeable future, occupying a deserved place among higher educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova.

**Conclusions:** The history of Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy represents an important page of our country's history. The teaching team brings new achievements in the training process of medical staff of the Republic of Moldova.

**Key words:** history, university, rectors.

**Motto:** “Though history contemplates not hastily, but substantially and irreproachably”

*M. Eminescu*

State University of Medicine in Chisinau (fig. 1) was inaugurated in the fall of 1945 by the Order No 427-899 of 31.08.1945, signed by the minister of health of the former USSR, George Miterev, who ordered the transfer of Leningrad Institute of Medicine No 1, temporarily deployed in Kislovodsk, to Chisinau. The reason for this transfer was Iosif Stalin's decision to punish the teaching staff of Leningrad Institute for continuing their activities during German occupation of the North Caucasus [1-4].

**The first rector (1945-1948) was Ipatie Sorocean** (fig. 2), native of the town Balta of the Moldovan Autonomic Soviet Socialist Republic, who received order directly from the hands of Veacheslav Molotov, first vice prime minister of the USSR, went to Kislovodsk, and came back to Chisinau in charge of an echelon, which included 15 heads of departments, eight university professors, 43 associate professors and lecturers, and 570 students.

The institute having a single faculty – General Medicine – began its activity on 20 November 1945. When asked, over some time, by the Minister of Health of the USSR if there were local teachers among the teaching staff, rector I. Sorocean responded – “Yes, we have one only”. He was a single teacher

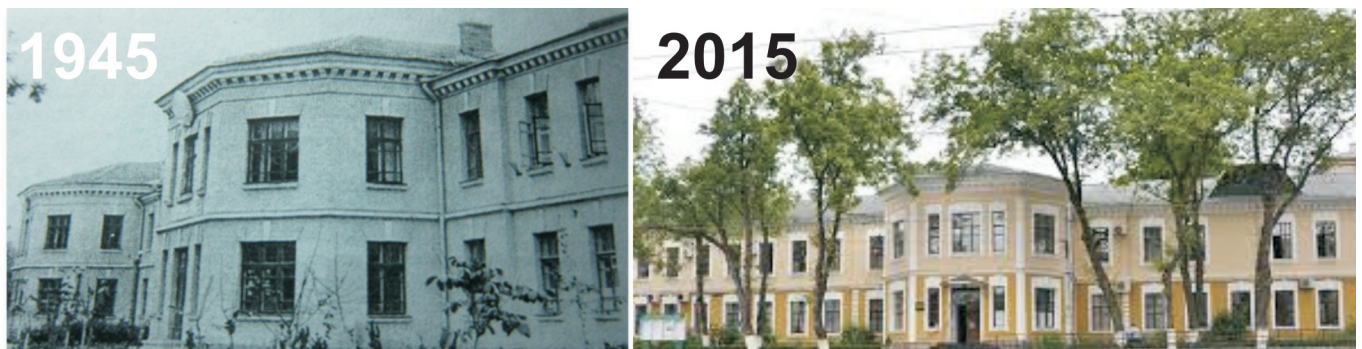


Fig. 1. Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy in 1945 and in 2015.



Fig. 2. Ipatie Sorocean,  
the first rector.



Fig. 3. Nikolai Harauzov,  
the second rector.



Fig. 4. Leonid Ganul,  
the third rector.



Fig. 5. Nicolae Starostenko,  
the fourth rector.

Moldovan originated and made the faculty in Bucharest, in the interwar period. Ipatie Sorocean was rector for a period of the toughest three years – war, famine, the beginning of forced collectivization. He remained in the memory of students due to his parental care about local students, through sharing with the neediest food and clothing. In this context, students affectionately called him “dad Sorocean”. During that period, there was presented one PhD thesis by Natalia Gheorghiu (1948) – a graduate of the University of Medicine in Bucharest.

**The second rector** (1948-1951) was the Associate Professor **Nikolai Harauzov** (fig. 3). In 1950 the first graduation of local physicians took place: Constantin Tabarna, Ion Vovc, Teodor Gatu, Valentina Halitov and George Neghina among them. Meanwhile, 12 PhD theses were presented, but none of local scholars.

**The third rector** (1951-1953) was **Leonid Ganul** (fig. 4). During his period of activity there were presented 12 PhD theses, and also none of the local scientists. The second graduation of local doctors was, rightly, the ‘gold’ graduation. Among them: Nicolae Testemitsu – future rector, minister of health, professor, academician of Moldovan Academy of Sciences (MAS), Vasile Anestiadi – future rector, academician of MAS; George Paladi – future Professor, Academician of MAS; Diomid Gherman – future Professor, Academician of MAS, renowned surgeons – Pavel Batca, Eugen Semeniuc and Eugen Maloman, the famous oncologist Professor Gurie Cosciug, Professors Vasile Negrescu, Victor Gheteu, Teodor Chiticari and Alexandru Nacu, Honorary Member of MAS.

**The fourth rector** (1953-1959) was Professor **Nicolae Starostenko** (fig. 5). He was a very good specialist-therapist, who was the treating doctor of Leonid Brezhnev, when he was the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Moldova (1952-1953). During his activity, more active promotion began for supporting training of local staff and leadership positions: heads of departments, deans, vice deans. During that time there were presented 42 PhD theses and 2 medical dissertations, of which 19 (18 PhD theses and one medical dissertation) by local researchers. The Faculty of Pediatrics was inaugurated in 1954.

**The fifth rector** (1959-1963), appointed to this position at the age of only 32, was **Nicolae Testemitsu** (fig. 6), the

first of indigenous origin and the first who was not dismissed from the post of rector with administrative penalties and by the ruling party, later promoted to the post of Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova (1963-1968). The merits of Testemitsu are undeniable: he introduced the differentiation of specialties, opening new departments: traumatology and orthopedics, anaesthesiology, phytology, urology, ophthalmology and others. He stimulated by all means, post-graduate and doctoral studies, he founded faculties – Dentistry (1959), Advanced training of Doctors (1963), Preventive Medicine (1963), Pharmacy (1964). He assured the switching – over the language of instruction from Russian into Moldovan as well as with editing and reprinting textbooks promoting national staff at different positions. Being the son of a peasant, a child educated in the national spirit, he could not tolerate the situation that affected indigenous people. Having been appointed the rector of the Institute of Medicine in 1959, he remained displeased with the fact that during 10 years of activity of the Institute of Medicine of Chisinau, there had been prepared 1689 doctors, of whom only 168 – natives, and out of 33 PhD theses only 16 were presented by locals, and out of 8 medicine dissertations, only one belonged to a native scientist.

He remained a son of earth, a branch of nation deeply implanted in the native land. Often he said: “*We have a big debt to the people from villages, who grow our bread, do not forget that most of us are from the countryside and we need to give back our debt to the village, which inhabitants are the Soul of the Country.*” And indeed, being rector and minister, he directed to all the prestigious scientific centers of the former USSR sons of peasants, who were honest and smart. Remaining faithful to the debt to peasants, for the first time in the USSR and the world, he proved in a scientific way the need to strengthen the primary medicine branch, followed by the construction of hundreds of outpatients’ clinics. This paper work was honored with the State Prize in 1974. Much later this conception became the notion of “family doctor”.

**The sixth rector** (1963-1985) of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy becomes the **Vasile Anestiadi** (fig. 7) – the future professor, academician of SAM, Laureate of the State prize (1967). He was leading the institute for 23 years. He was a controversial person. Taking the baton from rector Nicolae



Fig. 6. Nicolae Testemitsanu, the fifth rector.



Fig. 7. Vasile Anestiadi, the sixth rector.



Fig. 8. Leonid Cobăleanski, the seventh rector.



Fig. 9. Ion Ababii, the eighth rector.

Testemitsanu, following his proposal and insistence, but even if Vasile Anestiadi followed the way of Nicolae Testemitsanu, he did not remain faithful to Nicolae Testemitsanu's principles.

He contributed to the construction and arrangement of: morphology block (1964), block for studies No 2 (1967), Pharmacy of the University (1982), Museum of the University (1975), aesthetic center (club) "Ion and Doina" (1985), houses for collaborators etc. During the time he was the head of the university there were presented 462 PhD theses and 61 dissertations.

The seventh rector (1986-1994) of the Institute was **Leonid Cobăleanski** (fig. 8). He fortified the material and technical basis of the University required for improving the training process for the students and residents. He introduced the training for doctors through residency. During that time there were presented 173 PhD theses, and 73 dissertations of which 105 and 59 respectively by natives. In 1991 State Medical Institute in accordance with rector Leonid Cobăleanski's proposal supported by minister of health Gheorghe Ghidirim, becomes Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy in acknowledgement of his honorable work to promote the national staff.

The eighth rector (1994 – present) is a University Professor, State Prize Laureate, Academician **Ion Ababii** (fig. 9). He is the Honorary Citizen of the City of Chisinau. Through diligent work in difficult socio-economic conditions, rector I. Ababii contributed to solving various urgent issues regarding the development of the university – through grants, international cooperation and partnership agreements. During his activity, rector I. Ababii acts as a true reformer of higher medical education, integrating the university in European and world educational structures.

He introduced residency and fellowship training; he began to enroll students from other countries to all faculties, implemented advanced methods and information technology in training process and medical research. He constantly develops material base of the University: there have been built dormitories, apartment buildings for university employees, and fitness complex, University Library and Museum, Alley of Great People of Indigenous Medicine etc. He created a

prestigious school of otorhinolaryngology. For his work, Professor I. Ababii was awarded with the Albert Schweizer Great Gold Medal, "P. Elrich" Gold Medal, "Robert Koh" Medal, "N. Pirogov" medal, etc. He is a Doctor Honoris Causa of several universities, Member of the European Office of the World Health Organization, Honorary Member of the Academy of Sciences of Poland and Finland, member of the Russian and US Academy of Otorhinolaryngology. In January 2014, Steten Lindgren – the President of the World Federation for Medical Education noticed: "We visited several Universities, but I am sure that the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Moldova has everything needed to be recognized internationally in medical education field".

During 2005-2008, the position of interim rector of Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy was assured by Professor **Nicolae Esanu**, who has contributed a lot to directing the training process of the youth and residents.

An important contribution to local science has made all the teaching staff of Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy. In the period of 1994-2011 there have been presented 544 PhD theses and 95 dissertations, after 2011 – till present, there have been presented 47 PhD theses and dissertations.

This autumn (2015), Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Republic of Moldova celebrates 70 years since its inauguration. Let's wish the prestigious Alma Mater and its rector – Ion Ababii, remarkable success in preparing future medical specialists needed so much for the Bassarabian nation, and let's wish the rectors gone into eternity a living and constant memory!

## References

1. Grossu Iu. De Nicolo Testemitanio Testimonium. Chişinău, 1997;347.
2. Seu I, Onea E, Cruşelniţchi G. Făuritorii unei Istории de Aur [The makers of "Golden Stories"]. Chişinău, 2005;431.
3. Raievschi M, Tintuc D. Ghidul Muzeului Universităţii de Stat de Medicină şi Farmacie „Nicolae Testemiţanu” [Museum guide of Nicolae Testemitsanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy], Chisinau, 2011;222.
4. Grossu Iu, Ababii I, Ceban E, et al. The Alley of brilliant scientists and doctors. Chisinau, 2015;155.