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Editorial

In Commemoration of the Academic Position of Professor Mostafa Rezaeian, a Prominent Iranian Parasitologist

***Hossein Hooshyar**

Department of Parasitology, School of Medicine, Kashan University of Medical Sciences, Kashan, Iran

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*Correspondence Email:
hooshyar4@gmail.com



Dear Editor-in-Chief

It is my honor to pay tribute to Professor Mostafa Rezaeian not only as a highly regarded academic teacher and perfect expert parasitologist, but also as a good and noble person.

Professor Mostafa Rezaeian was born on 7 Jul 1946 in Tehran, the capital Iran. He graduated from "Jam" high school in the "Gholhak" neighborhood in 1966. Then he entered Austria and completed his graduate studies for a master's degree (MSc.) in cellular and molecular biology sciences at Graz University. Mostafa completed studies in parasitology at this university. He defended his thesis

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entitled "Biochemical identification of *Frenkelia, Sarcocystis*, and *Toxoplasma gondii*" under the supervision of Professor Otto Kepka (1926-1996) and graduated as Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in 1975. The presentation of Kepka and Rezaeian's study results was noticed and encouraged at the German Parasitology Conference in Berchtesgaden, 1976 (1). After returning to Iran, Mostafa joined the Department of Parasitology, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) as research staff from Jun 1976 to Aug 1978. During this period, he carried out valuable high-quality research, in cooperation with Dr. F. Sheiban, on the distribution of human intestinal protozoa in seven villages of Bandarabass, which was a hyperendemic area for intestinal parasitic disease in the south of Iran. This study showed a high prevalence (80.4%) of intestinal protozoan infection in this region which is related to poor environmental sanitation, poor socio-economic conditions and a low degree of personal and public health (2). Dr. Rezaeian and coworkers repeated this study thirty years later in 2009 in the same villages. They showed a clear decrease in prevalence (48.8%) and multiple infections of intestinal protozoa in this region (3).

Since 1978, Mostafa has been working at the Department of Parasitology of the School of Public Health, TUMS, first as a contractual assistant and subsequently as a recruitment assistant professor of education in 1979. He received the position of associate professor of parasitology at the university in 1987 and the position of full professor in 1992.

Dr. Rezaeian's early research and educational interests dealt with intestinal and genital protozoan infections, especially human intestinal amoebas and flagellates. Later her research focused on the free-living amoeba and coccidia.

However, he did not neglect teaching and research on other human and zoonotic parasitic diseases.

Dr. Rezaeian's efforts resulted in the establishment and equipping of the intestinal-genital protozoan laboratory. His laboratory soon became a reference laboratory that accepted patients and provided valuable services in correctly diagnosing cases sent from all over the country. In addition, his laboratory was a suitable platform for MSc and Ph.D. students under his supervision to continue research projects and studies. Professor Rezaeian was dedicated to many generations of young students in master's and doctoral programs and promoted many of them. Nowadays, some of these students are famous and prominent Iranian parasitologists. All students that trained under the supervision of Dr Rezaeian believes that Professor Rezaeian is a highly respected, ethical, and impressive academic scholar. Dr. Rezaeian is the supervisor and advisor of more than one hundred master's and Ph.D. theses in parasitology. Also, he has spent many years teaching parasitology to medical, veterinary, and paramedical students.

Dr. Rezaeian has pioneered and initiated many research areas of intestinal parasitic protozoa in Iran. The most important examples of this series of his scientific activities include

-Axenic cultivation of Entamoeba histolytica

-Axenic cultivation of Giardia lamblia in Iran.

- launch of continuous cultivation of different species of intestinal amoeba and flagellated protozoa.

- Cryopreservation of different species of intestinal amoeba and flagellated protozoa.

-Identification and cultivation of important free-living amoebas.

-Establishment of different serological methods for identification of intestinal and genital human parasitic protozoa in Iran.

-Identification of distribution of Entamoeba histolytica and Entamoeba dispar in different regions of Iran.

-Establishment of molecular methods for identification of intestinal and genital human parasitic protozoa in Iran.

Also, Dr. Rezaeian's and his student's studies resulted in clarifying the epidemiological situation of intestinal parasites in many parts of Iran. Some species of parasitic protozoa, such as *Sarcocystis*, *Cyclospora*, *Acanthamoeba*, *Naegleria, Vermamoba, Microspridia*, and *Hartmanella*, were isolated and first reported from humans by Dr. Rezaeian and co-workers in Iran (4-7). The results of the scientific research of Dr. Rezaeian and his colleagues are very fruitful and are available in the form of a significant number of theses and research projects in the library of the School of Public Health.

The reports of this research have been published in a large number of English and Persian scientific articles in valuable national and international peer reviewed journals as well as several books that are regularly referenced by researchers. For example, from 2005 to 2025, only 135 published articles by Dr. Rezaeian and his colleagues were indexed in Scopus, and 24% of them had international collaborators. These articles had more than 3000 citations and resulted in an h-index of 33 and a G. index of 45, which indicates the high impact of his articles and research in the scientific community.

Due to the lack of parasitology textbooks and teaching resources in Persian, Dr. Rezaeian has been diligent in writing and translating specialized books and booklets in this field throughout his scientific life. The most important of his published books are the following:

1-Rezaeian M, "Invitro cultivation of Entamoeba." School of Public Health publication. No. 2096, 1987.

2- Rezaeian M, "Amoebiasis." School of Public Health publication. No. 2097, 1987.

3- Rezaeian M, "Amoebiasis" In Azizi F (Ed): Epidemiology and control of common disorders in Iran. Endocrine and Metabolism Research Center Press, Tehran, 1994. The fourth edition of this book was published in 2017.

4- Rezaeian M, "Giardiasis" in Azizi F (Ed): Epidemiology and control of common disorders in Iran. Endocrine and Metabolism Research Center Press, Tehran, 1994.

5- Martinez Augusto Julio; "Free- living amoeba." Translated by Rezaeian M and Dibaji SR. Tehran University Press 1997.

6-Dargahi H and Rezaeian M, "Total Quality Management (TQM) in Clinical Laboratory." Tehran University Press 2003.

7- Edrissian Gh, Rezaeian M, Ghorbani M, Keshavarz H & Mohebali M. "Medical protozoology." TUMS Press, 2007(8). The third edition of this book was published in 2019.

This book is widely used and cited by scholars and educators and approved by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education as the textbook and official reference of medical protozoology for students in Iranian medical universities. This book is also used as a source in master's and doctoral entrance exams. The Medical Protozoology book was the selected book at the 17th Ibn Sina Festival in February 2015.

8- Rezaeian M and Niyyati M. "Human pathogenic free-living amoeba." TUMS Press. 2009.

9- Hooshyar H and Rezaeian M. "Amoebas." TUMS Press, 2011. This book achieved a third edition in 2022.

10- Rezaeian M. "Intestinal protozoan infection" in Yavari P (Ed): Epidemiology Textbook of Prevalent Diseases in Iran (2nd Ed). Gap publication. Tehran, 2020.

This book is recommended by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education as the textbook for epidemiology master's and doctoral entrance exams. In addition, Dr. Rezaeian has supervised a number of other parasitology books that were written or translated by his students.

The Iranian Society of Parasitology (ISP) was established in 1994. Dr. Razaeian was the member of the board of funders of ISP. Dr. Rezaeian has been a member of the board of ISP from 1994 until now, and he was vice

president or president of the society in some periods. This society has organized National and International Congress of Parasitology and Parasitic Diseases (NICOPA) in Iran in 12 series. Dr. Rezaeian was a member of the scientific committee and chairman of the intestinal protozoan infection panel in all NICOPA programs. He has presented key oral and poster lectures and was the member of the scientific committee and chairman of the intestinal protozoan infection panel in all NICOPA programs.

The Iranian Journal of Parasitology launched and started to be published by ISP in 2006. Dr. Rezaeian is a member of the editorial board of the Iranian Journal of Parasitology and some other scientific journals, such as The International Archives of Health Sciences, and Iranian Journal of Microbiology. These Journals are indexed and abstracted by ISI, PubMed, and SCOPUS international databases.

Professor Rezaeian was a member of the Board of Medical Parasitology in the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. He held this position until retirement, and he was the secretary of this board in some periods.

Professor Rezaeian was involved in several management and organizational activities, including

1-Directorship of the library of the School of Public Health, TUMS (1985-1997).

2- Directorship of Ramsar Educational and Research Center (1986-1999).

In this research center, Professor Rezaeian prepared a suitable platform for studies and investigations on the etiology and epidemiology of human and animal intestinal parasitic infections in the northern region, the other endemic area of parasitic diseases in Iran. A lot of Ph.D. and M.Sc. Theses and projects were done under his supervision that clarified the epidemiological aspects of intestinal parasitic infection in north of the Iran (9). He founded a specialized intestinal parasitic diagnostic laboratory in this center, which was the only parasitological laboratory in the west area of Mazandaran province, which provided diagnostic services to the people for more than a decade.

3- Head of the laboratory Sciences Department as well as participation in the launch of the Allied Medical Sciences faculty of TUMS (1991-2012).

4-Founder and chancellor of evening courses of TUMS (1991-2016).

Evening courses at TUMS are the first second- shift university courses founded in Iran after the Islamic revolution. This fee-paying university has been initially offering associate and bachelor's degrees in different medical science programs since 1991. This university then indeed offered postgraduate programs and initiated student admission in six master's programs in medical sciences from September 2013. During the chancellorship of Professor Rezaeian, about 7000 students graduated from this university in various medical sciences programs. He selected the university's top professors to teach in these courses so the quality of education in the evening course was equal to that of the daytime courses. A significant number of graduates of evening courses of TUMS later entered Ph.D. programs, and nowadays some are serving as faculty members in other universities of Iran.

5- Head of Department of Medical Parasitology and Mycology, TUMS (1998-2013).

6-Member of TUMS educational council (1999-2016).

7- Member of the Iranian policy of research council, Research Deputy, Ministry of Health and Medical Education (1997-1999).

8- Council member of Research Laboratories Networks in Medical Sciences of Iran (1998-2000).

9- Chairman of the Pathobiological Committee of Research Laboratories Networks in Medical Sciences of Iran (1998-2000).

10- Member of postgraduate studies council, School of Public Health, TUMS.

11- Member of University Audit Board, TUMS, for 5 years.

12- Member of the Central Audit Board, Ministry of Health and Medical Education for 8 years.

13- Vice chair of deputy minister of education, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, and secretary of educational committee of basic medical sciences, health, and specialization (1998-2013). In this position, Dr. Rezaeiain in addition to the quantitative and qualitative expansion of master's and Ph.D. programs in basic sciences in the medical university, in consultation with members of board committees of basic medical sciences, made an effort to developed a revise of the curriculum of various basic sciences, including medical parasitology.

Professor Rezaeian retired after 41 years of valuable scientific and management academic services in Oct 2016. A look at his brilliant performance in education, research, and management shows his perseverance and effectiveness of research and education in the parasitology fields of Iran. Undoubtedly, Professor Rezaeian has played an important role in the development of parasitology and medical education in the country. He is an influential and enduring person in the Iranian field of medical parasitology. Familiarity with the scientific and research activities of this prominent professor can be a model for students and activists in the field of parasitology in the country. In fact, I cannot find words that express my sincere thanks and gratitude in commemoration of this prominent Iranian scientist. I must say, for me and many other students and colleagues who worked with him, Professor Rezaeian is “academic dad” and good friend.

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