

OBITUARY

DR ALEXANDR ALEXANDROVICH KUCHUK (1952-2002)



On 15 April 2002 there occurred the untimely death of Dr Alexandr Alexandrovich Kuchuk after a long and severe illness in Kiev, Ukraine. He was a prominent scientist, clinician and organizer in the field of occupational medicine, and a member of the editorial board of the Annals of Agricultural and Environmental Medicine since the foundation of the journal in 1994.

Alexandr A. Kuchuk was born on 7 August 1952 in Lvov as a son of a professor of internal medicine. He graduated in 1975, gaining a MD degree with Honours at the Vinnitsky Medical University after which he worked in the Central Institute of Clinical Medicine in Kiev, specializing in diagnostics and treatment of ischemic heart disease. In December 1980, Dr Kuchuk began his research work at the Institute for Occupational Health of the Ukrainian Academy of Medical Sciences in Kiev (at that time the Institute of Work Hygiene and Occupational Diseases) where he worked until the end of his life. His research interest at that time concentrated upon early diagnostics of occupational respiratory diseases and advancement of lung function tests.

In 1982, Dr Kuchuk gained his Candidate degree (corresponding to PhD) on the basis of the Dissertation “Criteria of early diagnostics of the occupational respiratory disorders in the workers of superphosphate industry”. In the same year he became the head of newly established laboratory developing biomedical criteria for professional activities. In 1987 Dr Kuchuk mastered in his skills in clinical immunology at the National Heart and Lung Institute in London, UK.

In 1990 Dr Kuchuk gained the degree of Doctor of Science (the highest scientific degree in Ukraine) on the basis of the Dissertation “Pathology of bronchopulmonary system in workers of enzyme factories and ways of prevention”. In July 1991 he became deputy director for science of the Institute for Occupational Health of the Ukrainian Academy of Medical Sciences in Kiev. Moreover, in the years 1992-1993 Dr Kuchuk was the head of the Department for Occupational Pathology at this Institute.

At the end of 1993, by open competition, Dr Kuchuk became Chief of the Department for Informatic Systems on Population and Environmental Health at the European Centre of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Bilthoven, the Netherlands. Working in this position during the years 1993-1999 he prepared the book “European Atlas of the Environment and Population Health”, published in 1999. In this meaningful monograph there are presented: a state of human environment in Europe, indicators of mortality and population health from various European countries, and the assessment of environmental hazards at the end of XX century.

Dr Kuchuk was a renowned scientist in the area of occupational and environmental health. He had published about 80 articles of high scientific value, many of them concerning the effects of organic dusts on exposed workers. Among these papers, there are pioneer studies on the effects of enzyme dust on the respiratory system of the workers and an outstanding study on exposure to organic dust hazards and work-related disorders in the Ukrainian fodder production facilities, published in the Annals of Agricultural and Environmental Medicine in 2000.

Dr Kuchuk has participated in the organizing of many international scientific meetings and was an initiator of the introduction of the international classification of pneumoconioses into Ukrainian health protection system.

With the untimely death of Dr Alexandr Alexandrovich Kuchuk, the Ukrainian and international scientific community and the editorial board of our journal have lost an outstanding scientist, prominent clinician, skilled organizer and an open-hearted, friendly man.

Let the memory of Dr Alexandr Alexandrovich Kuchuk always live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

*Colleagues from the Institute for Occupational Health of the
Ukrainian Academy of Medical Sciences in Kiev and the
Editors of the Annals of Agricultural and Environmental
Medicine in Lublin*