


OBITUARY

Prof. Dr. Karim Vessal

Prof. Karim Vessal (Figure 1), MD, was a great scientist and leader in the field of basic and clinical researches, a beloved professor, physician at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. He died on Feb 19, 2022, at the age of 89 in Shiraz, where he was Born in 1933. He came from a famous family, with well known poets, artists and philosophers. After primary and high schools, he immigrated to Europe and enrolled at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany and received his MD degree in 1957. After that, he studied physics and obtained a degree from 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 treating the patients for a few years before returning to Iran, where he served as a co-founder of Nemazee hospital radiology ward and also the head of Radiology Department. It is not an overstatement that all radiologists in Iran learned something from him.

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At the same time, in 1974, he started Iranian journal of Medical Sciences (IJMS, 2022), one of the most prestigious and pioneer medical journals in Iran.



Figure 1. Prof. Dr. Karim Vessal (Personal album)

Professor Vessal was 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 (AIM, 2022), a journal in English language that was affiliated to the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences.

As a member of Academy, he contributed to the growth of science production. “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% (Bakhtiari, 2021). 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 the 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, Professor Karim Vessal helped us to establish the annual Shiraz Geographic Congresses that continued for 18 years”, said Professor Tabei, MD, the past chancellor of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (SUMS) and the founder of the SUMS medical ethics and philosophy department.

Professor Vessal was also a founding member of research office for history of medicine and Vesal Science Museum in Nourani Vessal’s garden in Shiraz (Figure 2). In 2010 he won the national science medal, first ranked Iranian science order from Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iranian post president from 2004 till 2012. He proposed an international journal for history of medicine in 2010 and he was chief consulting and chairperson in journal of Research on History of Medicine (RHM, 2022) and this was one of the many scientific contributions by a great man in soul and in scientific achievement.



Figure 2. Vesal Science Museum in Nourani Vessal’s garden in Shiraz
(Personal album)



Conflict of Interest

None.

References

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