

## Professor Gastone G. Nussdorfer (1943–2007)

Professor Gastone G. Nussdorfer, Professor of Anatomy at the University of Padua, Doctor *Honoris Causa* of Poznań Medical University and member of the editorial Board of *Folia Morphologica*, died on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007. He was 63.



Gastone G. Nussdorfer was born in Venice on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1943. He obtained the General Certificate of Education (Classic Liceo “Marco Foscarini” Venice) *cum laude* on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1961 and the degree of Doctor of Medicine from Padua University *cum laude* on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1967. He joined the Department of Anatomy of Padua University as assistant professor in 1967 and was promoted to ordinary professor in 1975. Gastone G. Nussdorfer was elected a Permanent Member of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere et Arti by a presidential decree of 19<sup>th</sup> May 1990.

The primary field of study of Gastone G. Nussdorfer was the cytophysiology of steroid-secreting tissue, especially the adrenal gland. Until 1985 investigations were carried out mainly by stereological techniques applied to electron microscopy as well as light and electron-microscopic autoradiography. In 1984 Prof. Bourne asked him to write a monograph on the structure and function of the adrenal cortex, and this was published in the *International Review of Cytology* 1986, Vol. 98, pp. 1–405. From 1985 the techniques of investigation in which he was interested included immunocytochemistry, steroid-hormone assay by HPLC and RIA and, from 1994, conventional and real-time PCR and other methods of modern molecular biology. He co-ordinated the activity of a group of twelve researchers, whose investigative effort focused on the inter-relationships between the adrenal gland and blood pressure. Special attention was paid to the roles of the endothelin, adrenomedullin, ghrelin, leptin and orexin

systems in the adrenal cortex and blood vessels. The department headed by Professor Nussdorfer became one of the leading centres worldwide for research into the cytophysiology and biochemistry of the adrenal cortex.

The research carried out by Professor Nussdorfer and his collaborators enabled it to be established that, apart from the by now well-known central hypothalamic-pituitary system secreting CRF and ACTH, there also exists a local CRF-ACTH system at the level of the adrenal gland and that the role of this system must be taken into consideration where pathophysiological considerations are involved in adrenal gland disease. It may be stated without exaggeration that our knowledge of the influence of neuropeptides on the adrenal gland stems mainly from the research of Professor Nussdorfer and his collaborators.

Professor Gastone G. Nussdorfer’s scientific output was exceptionally prolific and valuable in terms of its cognitive content, comprising more than 540 scientific works and monographs almost exclusively devoted to research into the endocrine function of the adrenal cortex. The results of his work constitute a significant and indelible element of the output of global science.

Gastone G. Nussdorfer was a member of the editorial boards of *Cytobios* (Cambridge), *Folia Morphologica* (Gdańsk); *Advances in Clinical and Experimental Medicine* (Wrocław), *Biomedical Research* (Tokyo), *Peptides* (Elmsford, USA) and the *International Journal of Molecular Medicine* (Athens). He served as reviewer for several international journals, including *Acta Anatomica*, the *Journal of Investigative Medicine*, *Cell Tissue Research*, *Histochemistry Molecular Biology*, the *Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*, *Biochemical*

Pharmacology, Differentiation, General and Comparative Endocrinology, Endocrinology, Endocrine Reviews, the Journal of Endocrinology, FEBS Letters, the Journal of Neuroendocrinology, the FASEB Journal, the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, the European Journal of Endocrinology, the Journal of Endocrinological Investigation, Research in Experimental Medicine and the American Journal of Physiology.

The relationship between Professor Nussdorfer and Polish science, and in particular with Poznań Medical University, should also be emphasised. Professor Nussdorfer's co-operation with this University,

and especially with the Department of Histology and Embryology, continued uninterrupted for nearly 35 years. Professor Nussdorfer's Department hosted many Polish science trainees (14), particularly from Poznań.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2002 Poznań Medical University honoured Professor Gastone G. Nussdorfer with its highest scientific title, that of Doctor *Honoris Causa*.

Professor Gastone G. Nussdorfer was an inspirational figure in the world of biomedicine. With his premature death experimental endocrinology has lost a unique and irreplaceable figure.

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