

Imre Romics, Miklós Romics

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF THE UROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT IN BUDAPEST DURING THE POSTWAR PERIOD (1946-1956)

The Urological Department of Royal Péter Pázmány University was found on 20 June 1920 in the St. Roch Hospital. In that city hospital there had existed a urological department since 1905. This department was designated as a clinic of Royal Péter Pázmány University and the department's head physician, Géza Illyés was appointed as university professor. He retired in 1941. In 1942 Gyula Minder, who had worked in St. John Hospital Budapest earlier, became Illyés's successor. Minder left Hungary and moved to Switzerland at the end of 1944.

On 19 January 1946 Antal Babics (Fig.1) was appointed to direct the urology department. He was the chairman till 1 July 1974. Babics started his work in very difficult circumstances. Due to the war the clinic was demolished. The country was poor; factories, goods, valuables, vehicles, trains were transported first to Germany, later to the Soviet Union. Hungary had to pay several hundred million dollars of indemnity to the neighbouring countries and the USSR. A lot of well-educated people, aristocrats, ingenious, medical doctors left the country. Wealthy people who did not want to leave Hungary lost all their properties and existence. The communist terror affected not only to the intellectual, but the farmers and a part of the labourers as well. Private innovations, spiritual and physical freedom were totally blocked. The physical and mental terror intensified in 1956 to which the Hungarians' answer was revolution.

We analyse this ten-year-long period, collecting all publications written by the medical doctors of our department.

Altogether 214 manuscripts were published by 15 doctors, average 14/year/doctor. 22 papers were written in English, 16 in German, 2 in French and 1 in Italian. We found only 1 paper in Russian, however almost every Hungarian paper has a Russian summary.

* Imre Romics, Semmelweis University Urological Department, Budapest Hungary

* Miklós Romics, Semmelweis University Urological Department, Budapest Hungary

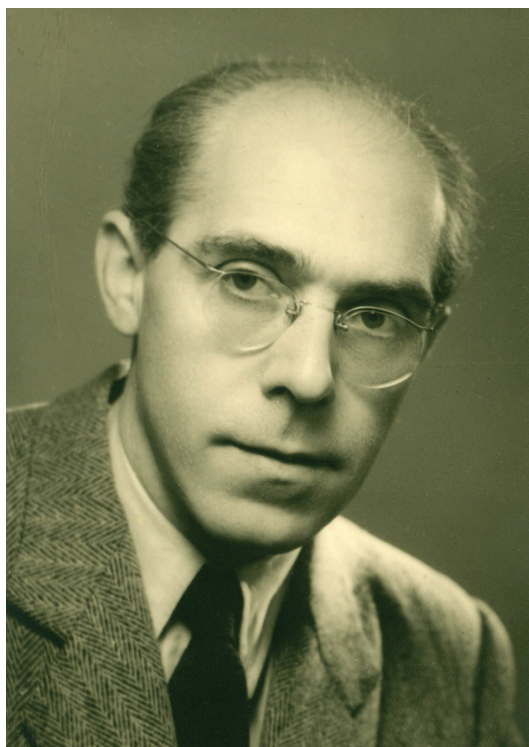


FIGURE 1.
Prof. Antal Babics

There was also published a book for medical students (Urology) and another two. Their titles: The pathophysiology of the renal calyces system, Impairment of the kidney (1952).

Four PhD-thesis were defended, namely urogenital tuberculosis, andrology, prostate cancer, renal cell cancer. One DSc dissertation was also defended; the topic was the lymphatic system of kidney.

We could find some “scientific” papers reflecting the politics: Importance of Marxism-Leninism in the Medical Science. And some others.-

It is quite surprising that the majority of the papers topic is basic science. Little money, closed borders, limited international import, prohibited collegial connection with urologists abroad...

They published about radiotherapy of penis tumour, treatment of bladder tumour in heterosexuals (!). No results were found.

Experience in treatment of 66 cases of renal dystopia was also published.

Even in 1948 there was a paper on treatment of 500 infertile men. Among

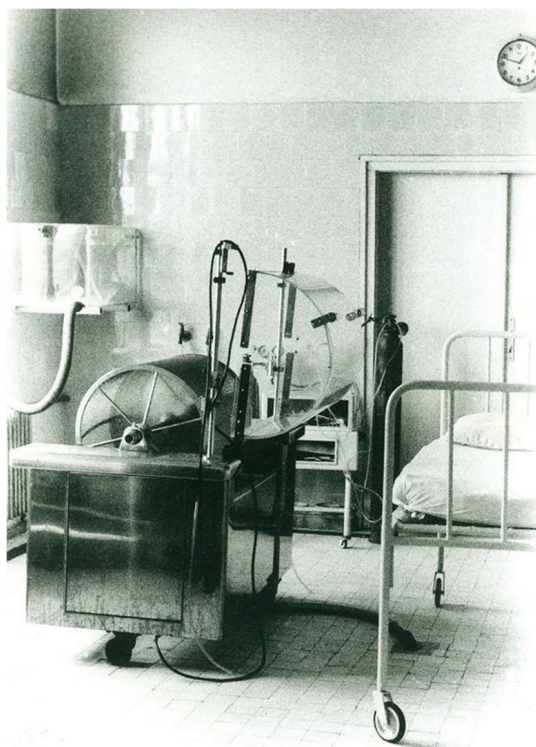


FIGURE 2.
Artificial kidney equipment

the topics we can read pseudohermaphroditism, sexual disorders with endocrine origin.

Papers came out about vesicovaginal fistula, contrast medium filling examination of bladder tumour. They wrote about wound healing as well. From 1941 to 1948 surgical mortality decreased from 3.46% to 1.23%. In 1941 26.4% of wounds healed within 8 days, in 1948 44.2%. Healing time dropped from 17.3 days to 12.5 days. The reason was new antibiotics, operative technique (prostate enucleation by Millin).

Most of the papers dealt with lymph circulation. The role of lymph vessels was investigated in ascending pyelonephritis. Change of blood circulation was also investigated in infection and obstruction of kidney. The level of elevated urea dropped after ion change therapy in dogs. Healthy and uremic cats were loaded with urea. Animals were also loaded by creatinine to search the pathophysiology of uraemia. New diagnostic method was paper-electrophoresis. The equipment (Fig.2) was homemade, they had no available foreign currency to buy one abroad.

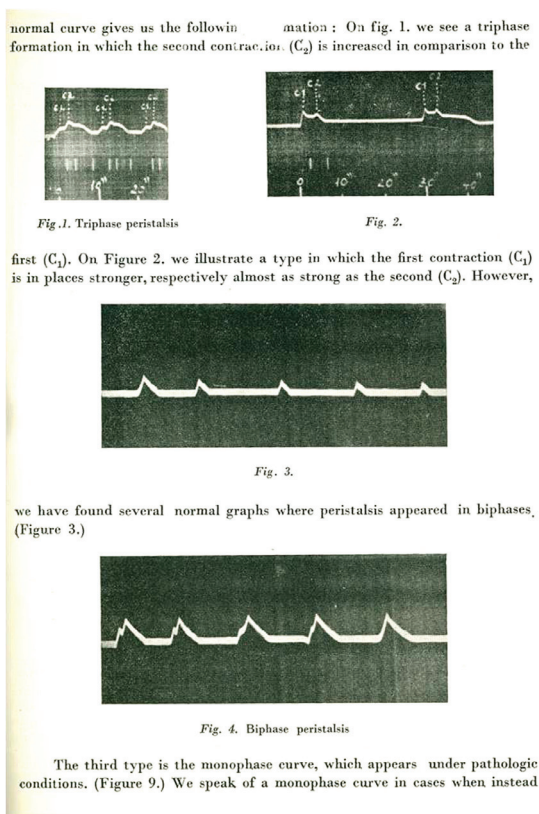


FIGURE 3.
Ureter motility registered by kymograph

Urinary stone development was also studied. They had some microscopic and crystalloid investigations to find the reason of “urine dyscolloiduria” as an explanation of urine stone. The way of artificial incrustation was studied as well. Some doctors investigated the activity of the calyceal muscle. The new antibiotics, the high or low dose penicillin effects were also studied on impaired and healthy kidney. The excretion of penicillin decreased in uremic dogs but had no harmful effect.

The ureter motility was registered by kymograph (Fig.3), which was home-made as well. The intrapelvic and intrarenal pressure was also studied in different grade ureter obstructions.

There was an experimental operation theatre, where mostly dogs were operated: different types of ureter neimplantation, hydronephrosis, “Coffey-operation” (uretero-enteroanastomose) combined with post mortem pathological procedures.



FIGURE 4.
The department library

Regarding the clinical research the variability is high. There can be seen paper about partial tumour resection of the kidney, open prostatectomy, TURP, hormonal relations (17-ketosteroide), the role of acid phosphatase enzyme activity in prostate cancer, (1948), isotope treatment of prostate cancer (1956). The experience of orchiectomy in prostate cancer patients was published short after the first invention by Huggins. The first recommendation of prostate cancer screening was mentioned at beginning of 50's. The treatment of bladder cancer with heterosexual hormone was unsuccessful... of course.

There are papers about clinical experiences with the treatment of urinary stones, new drugs, urotrauma, uropathology, congenital disorders. Case reports were written about foreign bodies in the bladder, and rare diseases.

Jenő Molnár published his first results with vaso-epididymo-anastomoses. He also studied infertility caused by endocrine disorders.

Summarising the scientific work of the department, it can be stated, that innovation, hard work, knowledge of languages (Fig.4) can achieve results even being under political terror and poor economic situation.