

In memoriam Dr. Tatjana Šumi-Križnik

In May 1995 we parted from Dr. Tatjana Šumi-Križnik, the first medical oncologist and an unforgettable colleague.



She graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ljubljana, in 1955, started to work at the Institute of Oncology, and passed her board exam in anesthesiology in 1962.

Nearly at the same time, she was faced with the reality of her illness. Being a wife and a mother of two sons she did not give in, but rather engaged all her forces in the study of internal medicine, led by her interest in the research of lymphomas – a systemic cancer disease.

In 1969 she passed her board exam in medical oncology. With great enthusiasm she headed the group for diagnosis, treatment and research of lymphomas. She was among the first who started with a

team approach to diagnosis and treatment at the Institute of Oncology in Ljubljana, and also succeeded in animating her co-workers for such work. She always strove for quality and advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Considering favourable treatment results obtained in patients with Hodgkin's disease, she systematically followed the guidelines in accordance with her own experience as well as that of other renown institutions in the developed world. With great knowledge and a sound professional distance towards introducing new cytotoxic drugs in the beginning of the 70's, she was the first to perform multidrug chemotherapy for lymphomas and advanced breast cancer, which is evident from her bibliography.

She contributed to regular and active co-operation at oncological and hematological meetings and congresses in the country and abroad. Despite her personal problems associated with her disease, she was a permanent source of energy and inspiration to her co-workers engaged in the field of lymphomas, proving all the time her organizational abilities and enthusiasm for continuous study and scientific research: The favourable results of these endeavours are reflected in good survival outcome of lymphoma patients.

She will always be remembered for her consistency and accuracy at work, and the fact that the patient's benefit was always in the first plane of all her activities. In the beginning of the 70's, she was the first to point out the paramount role of medical oncologists in comprehensive cancer care, which has also become generally recognized world-wide.

Unfortunately, her grave disease forced her to retire as early as in 1980. Nonetheless, as a result of her systematic teaching of young doctors and nurses, she left behind a well organized team and department for lymphomas. Unfortunately, her wish for a faster development of clinical oncology has remained unfulfilled due to insufficient personnel. Those of us, who had the opportunity to work with her, will do our best to follow in her footsteps, thus proving that her outstanding efforts were not in vain.

Maria Fidler-Jenko