

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17816/JOWD58100>

Professor A.M. Mazhbits

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Notable an obstetrician-gynecologist, urologist, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor Alexander Mazhbits made a great contribution to the history of medicine of the USSR and the annals of the Arkhangelsk state medical Institute (ASMI, now – the North-State Medical University (NSMU)), where he headed the Department in 1953–1958. Being the author of over 120 scientific works and 7 books, many scientific inventions and publications on obstetric and gynecological urology and its history, he was a creator of the textbook “Operative urogynecology”, inventor and prominent scientist. Each operation for a particular urogynecological disease the author described in detail and step by step with the attachment of original visual drawings, photos or radiographs, diagrams of practical activities. Alexander Moiseevich was the first who proposed a new direction for the creation of urogynecology. Not specific urologists, surgeons or obstetricians-gynecologists should deal with this activities, but urogynecologists who consider the female pelvis as a whole. A.M. Mazhbits wrote: “Obstetrics-gynecology and female urology are daughter cells of general pelvic surgery, they are twins of different ages, so closely related to each other genetically, clinically and practically that the boundaries between them are often smoothed out.”

Keywords: history; urology; gynecology; balneotherapy; Arkhangelsk State Medical Institute.

To cite this article:

Baranov AN, Andreyeva AV, Revako PP, Istomina NG. Professor A.M. Mazhbits. *Journal of Obstetrics and Women's Diseases*. 2021;70(3):5–10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17816/JOWD58100>

Received: 12.01.2021

Accepted: 20.04.2021

Published: 30.06.2021

УДК 618:92Мажбиц

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17816/JOWD58100>

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Известный акушер-гинеколог, уролог, доктор медицинских наук, профессор Александр Моисеевич Мажбиц оставил яркий след в истории медицины СССР и в летописи Архангельского государственного медицинского института (АГМИ, в настоящее время — Северный государственный медицинский университет — СГМУ), где он заведовал кафедрой в 1953–1958 гг. Профессор А.М. Мажбиц является автором более 120 научных работ и семи монографий, многих научных изобретений и изданий по акушерско-гинекологической урологии и по ее истории, создателем учебника «Оперативная урогинекология», изобретателем и видным ученым. Каждую операцию по поводу того или иного урогинекологического заболевания автор описывал подробно и поэтапно с приложением оригинальных наглядных рисунков, фото- или рентгенограмм, схем практической деятельности. Александр Моисеевич впервые предложил новое направление по созданию урогинекологии и считал, что заниматься этой деятельностью должны не просто урологи, хирурги или акушеры-гинекологи, а урогинекологи, которые видят в женском тазу одно целое. А.М. Мажбиц писал: «Акушерство-гинекология и женская урология — дочерние клетки общей хирургии, это — близнецы с различным возрастным цензом, генетически, клинически и практически так интимно связанные между собою, что границы между ними зачастую сглаживаются».

Ключевые слова: история; урология; гинекология; бальнеотерапия; Архангельский медицинский институт.

Как цитировать:

Баранов А.Н., Андреева А.В., Ревако П.П., Истомина Н.Г. Профессор А.М. Мажбиц // Журнал акушерства и женских болезней. 2021. Т. 70. № 3. С. 5–10.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17816/JOWD58100>

Alexander Moiseevich Mazhbits (Abram Shliom Chaim Movshevich) was born on November 4 (November 21 according to the new style), 1894, in Gorodok (Victoria station) of Kamyansky-Podolsk province in a family of servants. In forms, A.M. Mazhbits always indicated his origin and nationality as Jewish, so several inconsistencies were traced in his biography [1, 2].

In 1916, he graduated from the state grammar school in Odessa. In the same year, he entered the main school of the neuropsychiatric institute in Petrograd, and from where, in 1918, he transferred to the Crimean University for his second year of medical education [2].

After graduating from the medical school of the Crimean University (now the Taurida Academy of the Crimean Federal University named after V.I. Vernadsky) in 1922, A.M. Mazhbits began working as an intern at the obstetric clinic of the Crimean University in Simferopol under the guidance of Professor Petr Georgievich Bondarev, who conducted classes in obstetrics [1].

The scientific activities of A.M. Mazhbits began in 1925 at the Leningrad Scientific Research Obstetric and Gynecological Institute where he worked first as an acting resident, junior assistant, senior assistant, and associate professor, and from 1937 to 1949, he was a professor, doctor of medicine, and head of the urogynecological clinic of the institute [2]. In 1929–1949, he conducted classes in operative gynecology, operative obstetrics, female gonorrhea, and obstetric and gynecological urology with the doctors of the Institute for Advanced Training of Physicians. Concurrently, he was in charge of the clinic at the Republican Research Institute of Skin and Venereal Diseases. Along with his work in the clinic, he was a consultant-gynecologist of the medical commission of Smolny, Volodarsky dispensary “Tekstilshchik,” the First Communal Hospital, among others [3].

During the summer from 1921 to 1940 and then in 1946–1947, he worked as a gynecologist at Balaklava, Yalta, Chokrak mud baths (Kerch peninsula), Saki mud baths, Mainak mud baths (Evpatoria), and Essentuki mud baths. Moreover, he was on commission for the selection of patients with gynecological conditions for Caucasian Mineralnye Vody and polyclinics in Zheleznovodsk. In subsequent years, he was a consultant-gynecologist at the Sochi-Matsesta resort [4, 5].

In 1936, the book “Obstetric and gynecological urology with an atlas” was published under his leadership [5]. The book aroused great interest and was recognized and appreciated by leading experts in this field. This was the first monograph on diseases of the genitourinary system in women that considered issues of the changes in the urinary system at various stages of pregnancy, during and after delivery, semiotics and diagnostics of urogynecological

diseases, and conservative and some surgical methods of treatment [2, 5].

In June 1941, nearly immediately after the outbreak of the war, a women's surgical hospital with 630 beds was launched. Five departments were created, the heads of which, together with A.M. Mazhbits, appointed employees of the institute: Senior Researcher L.A. Shuster, Professor R.G. Lurie, Associate Professor E.I. Gurevich, Doctor N.N. Cuba, and Professor L.M. Bublichenko. During the Great Patriotic War from 1941 to 1943, A.M. Mazhbits was the leading surgeon of the evacuation Hospital No. 1448 and the senior surgeon and gynecologist at the hospital for 4171 patients with minor wounds of the Leningrad Front. From May 1943 until the end of the war, he was the chief army gynecologist of the air defense forces of the Leningrad Military District [6].

As a leading surgeon of evacuation hospitals, A.M. Mazhbits trained pools of doctors and conducted theoretical and practical classes and clinical and pathological conferences. For the Leningrad Front in 1943–1946, he trained a group of military gynecologists to serve the female contingent of the army and conducted systematic gatherings of doctors, military paramedics, and sanitary inspectors. He was the chairman of the army military–medical commission [6].

At wartime, his scientific research and works were devoted to new techniques in obstetrics and gynecology, the consequences of birth trauma, and the creation of a new urethra in traumatized women. He developed methods of recruiting women contingents in the military, provided hygiene measures for them, and paid attention to equipment and pregnancy course, effect of military service on the health of women in the military, and treatment of occupational diseases [6].

For his work during the war years, he received several state awards, such as the Order of the Patriotic War II, and medals “For the Defense of Leningrad” and “For Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.” He was demobilized in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant colonel of the medical service [5, 6].

After demobilization, he was appointed head of the urogynecological clinic of the Central Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the Ministry of Health of the USSR until liquidation of the urogynecological department of the institute in 1949 by the decision of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences. From 1945 to 1952, he was the chairman of the section of the Leningrad obstetric and gynecological society for female gonorrhea and was a member of the board of the commission on obstetric aid Lengorzdravotdel [1, 7]. In addition, since 1921, he was engaged in issues of conservative gynecology and balneology in the summer as a consultant-gynecologist in Russian resorts. In 1947, the Central Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the USSR Ministry of Health in Leningrad issued his manual for doctors

"Balneotherapy in Gynecology and Obstetrics." In the same year, his work, "Bibliography of Scientific Papers of the Central Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology for 150 Years (1797–1947)," was published. He wrote that gynecological massage in combination with physiotherapy, spa water, and mud therapy acted physiologically and served as a strong tissue irritant [4].

To help Soviet health care, A.M. Mazhbits traveled to cities and regions of the USSR: Sochi, Kaliningrad, Chelyabinsk, Murmansk, Molotov, Pskov, Tallinn, and others, where he examined obstetric and gynecological institutions and, in a dermatovenerological network, instructed doctors at meetings and supervised 10 days of advanced training [1, 3].

In 1953, A.M. Mazhbits was sent to work at the Arkhangelsk State Medical Institute (ASMI, now Northern State Medical University). From 1934 to 1944, the department was successfully headed by the well-known representative of the scientific school D.O. Ott – Professor V.V. Preobrazhensky. After his death, the heads of the clinic were constantly changing [1, 5].

In the 1950s, Professor A.M. Mazhbits was already a well-known scientist who had published over a hundred scientific papers on urology, operative gynecology, and reconstructive surgery of pelvic organs. The arrival of a leader with such a name and practical experience foreshadowed the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the ASMI to flourish scientific activity. Under his leadership, two volumes of scientific works were published [1, 8, 9].

Mazhbits conducted balneological studies at the resorts of the European North (Solvychegodsk, Kotlas), developing new methods of treatment using gynecological massage in combination with physiotherapy, spa water, and mud therapy for various female diseases, providing patient consultation, among others [4, 10].

A.M. Mazhbits developed several unique surgical interventions ("operation Mazhbitz") in the treatment of urinary incontinence in women, prolapse of the uterus and vagina, injuries and fistulas of the urogenital tract in women, etc. Patients from different cities and villages of Russia came to him for surgical help [8, 11].

A.M. Mazhbits was an inventor, such as that of a new model of a spoon for taking secretions from the genitourinary system in women. As an excellent practitioner in urogynecology, he has developed several unique surgical interventions in the treatment of urinary incontinence and new methods of treatment of gonorrhoea in women. As a result of work conducted earlier and completed in Arkhangelsk in 1968, he published the book "Gonorrhoea of women and its complications" [5, 7].

A.M. Mazhbits worked in the student scientific circle at the department and was the scientific supervisor of

the secondary vocational education of the institute and participated in meetings with teachers in student hostels. A.M. Mazhbits talked about "Pushkin Petersburg." Since 1953, he was the chairman of the scientific society of obstetrics and gynecology in Arkhangelsk. On September 10, 1958, he was dismissed from his post, and on February 4, 1959, he resigned from the ASMI and returned to Leningrad [1].

In 1960, Mazhbits headed the recently opened Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Novokuznetsk State Institute for Advanced Medical Education, which was flourishing at that time. Until old age, he headed the department and carried out several huge medical, scientific, and pedagogical works [1].

In 1964, A.M. Mazhbits published a fundamental work, "Operative urogynecology," which has undergone a large number of editions and is still very popular and authoritative [5, 11]. The book was based on the results of his 40 years of observations on the surgical treatment of patients with urogynecological conditions at the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, at the departments of obstetrics and gynecology of the ASMI, and Novokuznetsk State Institute for Advanced Medical Education. The old ones were improved, and several new methods of surgical treatment of these patients were developed. He proposed some operations: urethropoiesis, transplantation of the ureters into the bladder by the vaginal route, suturing of cervico-vaginal fistulas (during this period, more than 1000 procedures were performed for urogenital and rectal fistulas of various etiologies as well as relative urinary incontinence and neoplasms of the genitourinary system) [11]. The chapter "On the perforation of abscesses of the pelvic organs into neighboring organs" was included in the book to help doctors engaged in purulent surgery, since the famous surgeon V.F. Voyno-Yasenetsky (Saint Luke), earlier in his book "Essays on Purulent Surgery," put forward the idea of creating a new discipline — pyology — for a detailed study of the morphological, biological, and physicochemical properties of purulent infection and did not consider the fate of pelvic ulcers that perforate the bladder, rectum, and other organs [8, 9].

Each procedure for a urogynecological disease is described in detail and step by step with the attachment of drawings, photographs or radiographs, and diagrams. All drawings and radiographs were mostly original and made during the practical work of the author. Before describing the operations, a brief history of the issue, etiology and pathogenesis, diagnosis, and clinical course are presented. The book traces the idea that this activity should be conducted not just by urologists, surgeons, or obstetricians-gynecologists but by urogynecologists with knowledge and experience in these contiguous areas, who see a single whole in the female pelvis [11].

A.M. Mazhbic wrote: "Obstetrics-gynecology and female urology are daughter cells of general surgery, they are twins with different age qualifications, genetically, clinically and practically so intimately connected that the boundaries between them are often smoothed" [2].

Currently, the staff of the museum complex of the Northern State Medical University is working on the study of the life and work of Professor Alexander Moiseevich Mazhbic, especially during the period of being the head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the ASMI.

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