



THE 160th ANNIVERSARY OF HENRY TURNER

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The year 2018 in the medical community was marked by the 160th anniversary of the birth of Henry Ivanovich Turner. The phenomenal energy of this person, his organizational skills, talent as a scientist and public figure, dedication, and finally, his humanism are admired to this day and will serve as a model for the education of future doctors for a long time.

Happiness and at the same time hard work to be the first. Henry Ivanovich Turner had fully experienced this happiness and this work. He was the organizer and leader of the first Russia Department and Clinic of Orthopedics of the Military Medical Academy, the initiator of the first Society of Orthopedic Surgeons, and the founder and honorary director of the USSR's first Institute for the Rehabilitation of Physically Disabled Children. Henry Turner was one of the first in Russia to raise questions of a disabled child, pointed out the need for a systematic struggle of the state with children's disability, and urged to come to the aid of a crippled child, initially with orthopedic treatment performed in conjunction with the upbringing, education, and training of any profession.

The article presents the biography of the outstanding person, one of the founders of Russian orthopedics, Henry Ivanovich Turner.

Keywords: Henry Turner; biography; Turner Institute for Children's Orthopedics; traumatology and orthopedics; children.

К 160-ЛЕТИЮ ГЕНРИХА ИВАНОВИЧА ТУРНЕРА

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2018 год в медицинском сообществе прошел под знаком 160-летия со дня рождения Генриха Ивановича Турнера. Феноменальная энергия этого человека, его организаторские способности, его талант ученого и общественного деятеля, его самоотверженность, наконец, его гуманизм восхищают по сей день и еще долго будут служить образцом для воспитания будущих врачей.

Счастье и одновременно тяжелый труд — быть первым. Генрих Иванович Турнер это счастье и этот труд в полной мере испытал на себе. Организатор и руководитель первой в России кафедры и клиники ортопедии Военно-медицинской академии, инициатор первого Общества хирургов-ортопедов, создатель и почетный директор первого в СССР Института восстановления трудоспособности физически дефективных детей. Генрих Турнер одним из первых в России поднял голос в защиту увечного ребенка, указал на необходимость планомерной борьбы государства с детским калечеством и призывал прийти на помощь калеченому ребенку прежде всего ортопедическим лечением, сочетающимся с воспитанием, образованием и обучением какой-либо профессии.

В статье представлена биография выдающегося человека, одного из основоположников отечественной ортопедии Генриха Ивановича Турнера.

Ключевые слова: Г.И. Турнер; биография; детский ортопедический институт им. Г.И. Турнера; травматология и ортопедия; дети.

Medicine is composed of science and art, and a wonderful cover of heroism stretches over them.

Hugo Glazer

In the early 1850s, at the invitation of Russian industrialists, a British national, engineer John Turner arrived in St. Petersburg with his family. He was a modest English specialist and could never have imagined that, years later, his surname, Turner, a common and otherwise meaningless name in England, would become an impersonation of humanism, loyalty to duty, and philanthropy in Russia. This surname was glorified by one of the six children of the engineer, his son Henrich Ivanovich Turner, who was born in St. Petersburg on September 29, 1858 [1–4].

When Henrich was 13 years old, his father Turner died of tuberculosis and the family was left without a breadwinner, facing poverty and destitution. However, such difficulties only tempered the boy's character. Teachers had always noted his diligence, discipline, and excellent performance. As a result, Henrich Turner graduated from the First St. Petersburg Classical Gymnasium at the age of 18 years as a “second best student” with an exceptional certificate [4].

In 1876, the young man was granted admission to the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy. It was later that Henrich admitted that, in his youth, “he did not feel any particular inclination for medicine,” and explained that he attended the Academy as “the product of his uncle's instillation,” as he had seen in his nephew “signs of a future doctor.” Five years later, on November 7, 1881, at the age of 23 years, Henrich received a doctor's diploma with honors. This was the final graduation of the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy in which teachers and students wore on their shoulder straps the monogram of the founder of the institution — Emperor Paul I. Graduates of the newly formed Military Medical Academy had another distinctive sign [4].

Following his graduation, Henrich Turner, in the same year of 1881, began work as a Junior Assistant in a Surgical Hospital of the Alexander Community of Red Cross Nurses. He worked under the direct supervision of an outstanding Russian military surgeon Karl Karlovich Rayer, who was one of the pioneers of the use of antiseptics in Russian surgery and became an extraordinary surgical mentor for Henrich. His simultaneous work in the

Surgical Department of Nikolaev Military Hospital also contributed to the development of Henrich as a doctor and scientist [2, 4].

During his practice, the young doctor was actively engaged in scientific research and systematized his observations of patients. In 1890, Turner was awarded the Sklifosofsky Gold Medal for one of his early studies “On the treatment of cicatricial contractures of the esophagus.” In 1891, he successfully graduated with the degree of Doctor of Medicine at the Military Medical Academy. In 1892, at the same institution, he defended his doctoral thesis on the theme “On the anatomy of the cecum gut and the vermicular appendix in relation to the pathology of perityphlitis” [1, 4, 5].

Following this, there was rapid career growth for the young doctor; in 1895, the Academic Council of the Military Medical Academy conferred on Turner the title of privat-docent within the Department of Desmurgy and Mechanurgy, and a year later, the 38-year-old was promoted as a professor in the same department.

Over the next four years working at the Department of Desmurgy and Mechanurgy, Henrich Turner revealed his talent not only as a scientist,



Fig. 1. Henrich Ivanovich Turner — Doctor of Medicine, professor in ordinary of the Imperial Military Medical Academy. St. Petersburg. Photo: circa 1913



Fig. 2. Exercise therapy with the pupils of the Shelter. Orthopedic Clinic of the Imperial Military Medical Academy. Henrich Turner is sitting in a white coat. Photo: circa 1910s

teacher and surgeon but also as an exceptional organizer. In particular, he filled the curriculum with practical work for students and collected bone and joint preparations from the consequences of injuries at the Department [5–7].

Owing to the initiative and perseverance of Henrich Turner, the Department of Desmurgy and Mechanurgy entrusted to him was transformed into an orthopedic department. The ceremonial opening of the first Russian orthopedic clinic with an outpatient department in the Academy took place on March 25, 1900 [4–8].

Simultaneously with his service at the Imperial Military Medical Academy, Henrich Turner was engaged in the popularization of medical science (Fig. 1). In 1900, he wrote and published the manual “First Aid Before the Doctor Arrived.” The Museum for First Aid, which was established by Turner at the Society for the Protection of People’s Health, served for general educational and academic purposes. For the introduction of wax exhibits, made especially for this museum, the scientist was awarded a Gold Medal at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1900 [1, 6].

Henrich Turner also made great efforts to promote sports and physical culture. He had drawn up a program of exercises through his own initiative, for which he was honored with a certificate of acknowledgment by the inspector general of military schools in 1910 (Fig. 2 and 3). Four years later, the Military Sanitary Scientific Committee invited Henrich Turner to head a commission to establish instructions for exercise therapy in the army [1].

However, the social and educational activities of Henrich Turner were not limited to this. In St. Petersburg, Turner also became known as the most active combatant against injuries in children. Thanks to Turner’s perseverance, the Orthopedic Clinic of the Military Medical Academy began to treat pupils of the Shelter for Disabled Children and Paraplegics of the Petrovsky Blue Cross Society, free of charge [1].

As a doctor, Turner actively participated in the work of the Shelter itself. Between 1911 and 1914, under the guidance of Turner, a new building for the clinic was built on Lakhtinskaya Street, which met the latest requirements of hospital construction and the level of orthopedic science of the time. Through the efforts of Turner, the “store yard for deprived children,” as Turner bitterly referred to the shelter, was reorganized into a treatment and educational institution, where, in addition to shelter and medical care, children learned reading and writing, arithmetic, scripture knowledge, drawing, singing, and various crafts. Henrich Turner recalled those years: “Their ability to develop their crippled body parts for the works of all kinds was amazing. They were engaged in shoemaking, tailoring, bookbinding, carpentry, plating chairs, etc. Even armless patients showed an amazing art of painting, woodcarving, writing” [4, 8–10].

Realizing the need for systemic and highly skilled medical care, Turner was the first in the country to defend a disabled child and voiced the need for a systematic state resolution of this problem. Meanwhile, the charity of the disabled in pre-revolutionary Russia depended solely on private



Fig. 3. Training on simulators. Orthopedic Clinic of the Imperial Military Medical Academy. Photo: circa 1910s

initiative, as there was no government care for disabled children [4].

This situation changed radically following the 1917 revolution. Soviet power attended to the problem of injured children on a national scale and at an unprecedented pace. The term “charity” of disabled children was replaced by the term “recovery” of children with physical disabilities. At the same time, the former shelter in Lakhtinskaya Street was provided with state means of subsistence and was transformed into the Medical Educational Institution for Physically Disabled Children (Fig. 4) [2, 9].

Due to the insistence of Henrich Turner, the institution had at its disposal a neighboring six-storey building on Lakhtinskaya Street. There were classes and craft workshops with equipment for the professional training of children on working specialties. The building also housed an equipped surgical department with a surgery room and a bandaging room, a gymnasium, and an outpatient department with physiotherapeutic devices [2, 9].

At the same time, at the initiative of Henrich Turner, in 1926, the Leningrad Society of Orthopedic Surgeons was established in Leningrad [4].



Fig. 4. Henrich Ivanovich Turner with the pupils of the Medical Educational Institution for Physically Disabled Children. Leningrad. Photo: the end of the 1920s



Fig. 5. Henrich Ivanovich Turner with the team of the Institute for the Rehabilitation of Physically Disabled Children and Adolescents. Leningrad. Photo: 1930s

Through the efforts of Henrich Turner, the Institution for Physically Disabled Children developed rapidly and transformed from a medical institution into a scientific and practical institution, gaining the all-Union fame. As a result, in 1932, the Institute for the Rehabilitation of Physically Disabled Children and Adolescents with 200 beds was established (Fig. 5) [2, 11].

In the year preceding this event, the medical community of the country widely celebrated the 50th anniversary of the scientific, medical, public, and educational activities of the outstanding Russian orthopedic surgeon Henrich Turner. The Soviet government awarded him the honorary title of Honored Worker of Science and the Order of the Red Star, and during his lifetime, the name Henrich Ivanovich Turner was given to the Orthopedic Clinic of the Leningrad Military Medical Academy and the Institute for the Rehabilitation of Physically Disabled Children and Adolescents initiated by Turner [9].

In 1933, by the order of the National Commissariat of Health, RSFSR, the Turner Institute for the Rehabilitation of Physically Disabled Children and Adolescents received Republican status. Thus, the vision of Henrich Turner to establish the institute as the center for organizing the combating against children's injuries in the USSR, as well as the methodological center organizing this combating, was implemented [2, 9–11].

Henrich Ivanovich Turner was the honorary director of the institute until the last days of his life.

Keeping clear intellect and high spirits, he continued to advise, share experiences, and give lectures and reports [6].

In one of his letters, Henrich Turner wrote: "You see, I'm still working hard... but time is merciless. It unfolds in front of us a picture of the end of our labors, the end of the conscious, as our intellect remains clear. We will live offering our hands to each other from afar, like old loyal friends!" [4].

Henrich Turner died a month after the start of World War II, in July 20, 1941, and was buried at the Bolsheokhtinsky cemetery in Leningrad.

Currently, the main medical buildings of the Turner Scientific Research Institute for Children's Orthopedics, since 1967, have been located in Pushkin, in a luxurious suburban area, close to the architectural and park reserve of the Catherine Palace. Henrich Turner's cherished dream to transfer the institute into a suburban area, in which children were able to recover with access to the open air following surgical treatment, was realized (Fig. 6). The historic building in St. Petersburg on Lakhtinskaya Street is also preserved, where, after refurbishment, a consultative and diagnostic center has been opened.

The institute is growing and developing. In 2009, a new building was opened, the footing of which was laid in 1988, and new operating theaters were opened. Furthermore, new laboratories have been equipped with first-class modern equipment and new surgical departments with wards for children with all conveniences have been made.



Fig. 6. The Turner Scientific Research Institute for Children's Orthopedics. Photo: 2018

The institute maintains extensive international contacts; it is known worldwide for the results of its research, which it represents at international forums; it is among the top European clinics in which foreign doctors are trained.

The institute team holds sacred the covenants and traditions of Henrich Turner. For many years, the solemn ceremony has become the initiation of young doctors, who come to the institute to study, in the community of "Turner followers."

The Turner Scientific Research Institute for Children's Orthopedics has become the leading clinical and research center for children's orthopedics and traumatology in Russia.

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Contribution of the authors

A.G. Baindurashvili created the concept and organized and performed final editing of the text of the article.

I.D. Vysoshchuk, A.V. Ovechkina, K.S. Solovyova were engaged in the collection and processing of information sources, writing the basic text of the article.

A.V. Zaletina, A.N. Melchenko performed collecting and processing sources of information, editing the text of the article.

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