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Biography

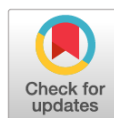
## Jean-Jacques Cheneau (1927–2022)

On July 14, 2022, at the age of 95, the world-famous orthopedic surgeon Jean-Jacques Cheneau, the creator of the famous corset for the conservative treatment of scoliosis, passed away.

Биография

## Жан-Жак Шено (1927–2022)

14 июля 2022 г. в возрасте 95 лет ушел из жизни всемирно известный врач-ортопед Жан-Жак Шено — создатель знаменитого корсета для консервативного лечения сколиоза.



Jacques Cheneau was born on May 14, 1927, in France. From an early age, he was actively interested in medicine, and in adolescence, having survived all the hardships of the Second World War, he became even more entrenched in his desire to become a doctor. In 1948, Jacques Cheneau entered the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toulouse, graduated it successfully in 1953, and completed an internship at the Val de Gras military hospital in Paris. In the same year, he was appointed chief physician of the small Tarbes garrison in the Toulouse region, where he proved himself to be a specialist who can act unconventionally and make quick decisions in difficult situations.

In 1954, Jacques became a doctor in a parachute battalion that fought in Vietnam. While saving the lives of French soldiers, he was seriously wounded and captured. In 1955, after he recovered from his injury, Jacques Cheneau returned to medical practice in Toulouse, where he received several diplomas (radiologist [1962], sports medicine doctor [1965], and rehabilitation specialist [1971]). After retiring, Jacques did not leave medical practice, but continued to work in public and private clinics in France and Germany. He was invited by universities worldwide to lecture and speak at scientific conferences.

In 1971, Jacques Cheneau developed a corrective derotational brace for the conservative treatment of scoliosis. An individual product is made for each patient based on a unique mechanics that considers the anatomical characteristics of the trunk and spinal deformities and distributes the corrective forces of the hardware in numerous (up to 50 points) places of pressure and unloading. As a result of pressure on the deformed areas of the spine, the tissues “correctly” shifted to the places of unloading (corset openings). Constant wearing of the corset during the day and its long-term use until the end of the bone growth

of the spine, in combination with special corrective and breathing exercises and adherence to the orthopedic regimen, provide positive treatment results in >90% of cases. The professor claimed that his “invention works 25% passively and 75% actively, and only compliance with all of the above conditions can effectively cure the curvature.” Since then, more than 50 years have elapsed, and medicine made a great progress. Professor Cheneau, with his followers and students, improved constantly the proposed design and applied computer technology and engineering innovations. However, his idea of a corrective derotation corset remains relevant worldwide to this day and is accepted as the gold standard in the conservative treatment of progressive scoliosis.

From 2005 to 2010, Jacques Cheneau was in Yevpatoria, where he explained the technology of his invention to the employees of the Orlyonok Sanatorium. Many specialists in Russia knew personally Jacques Cheneau and attended his training in France.

In 2008, Professor Cheneau visited St. Petersburg and conducted a series of seminars and training workshops on the production of corsets, followed by certification of Russian specialists. In addition, he visited the H.I. Turner National Medical Research Center for Children’s Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery, presented his innovations in spinal orthotics, consulted patients, and discussed the results of treating scoliosis in children and adolescents with the center’s specialists.

He was talented, modest, but purposeful, and infinitely devoted to his beloved profession and service to people. Jacques Cheneau made a huge contribution to the development of medical science. His name will remain forever not only on the pages of the history of medicine but also in the hearts of tens of thousands of cured patients.

*Staff of the H.I. Turner National Medical Research Center for Children’s Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery.  
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J. Cheneau and A.G. Baidurashvili during a visit to the H.I. Turner National Medical Research Center for Children's Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery



J. Cheneau and A.V. Ovechkina during a visit to the H.I. Turner National Medical Research Center for Children's Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery



J. Cheneau and V.V. Drobyshevsky at the establishment of the international society for the bloodless treatment of scoliosis SOSORT in 2006 in Poznań

## DOCTOR CHENEAU DIED

In July 2022, almost a century of life of one of the main modern benefactors of mankind passed away. The man who invented the method of saving beautiful young children from slowly turning into unfortunate hunchbacked furies before the eyes of their parents died peacefully in a charity house in blessed France.

Unlike Cottrell, another world-famous French doctor who also dealt with the non-surgical treatment of scoliosis all his life (and became a very rich man at the end of his life, thanks to his patent for a surgical design), Jean-Jacques Cheneau did not patent his corset and freely spread knowledge about his inventions worldwide.

The world did not immediately understand and accept this gift. In 1976, in socialist Czechoslovakia, in Bratislava, at an international congress, Soviet luminaries of orthopedics, having seen the results of treatment with a Cheneau brace, did not believe in them, relying on their former unsuccessful experience of treatment with other corsets.

Only Germany, given the highest level of orthopedic technology and orthopedics in general (which was the result of the treatment of numerous wounded individuals in the two world wars), appreciated the importance and value of the invention of the Frenchman Cheneau. Being socially focused on caring for children and youth, the German state has reduced the number of surgeries for scoliosis by 10 times, thanks to their timely directive and uncontested use of the high-quality expensive Cheneau braces of various modifications and their full payment by health insurance funds.

The advent of the Internet contributed to the German success in this bloodless treatment of scoliosis, which became a saving invention for patients with scoliosis and scoliosis professionals worldwide. Thus, the Cheneau brace was again recognized in Russia.

After the Chernobyl disaster, Germany provided great assistance to Belarus in reforming the prosthetic industry, as well as in establishing the production of free Cheneau braces for citizens of the Republic of Belarus in Minsk. Minsk specialists, in turn, shared their knowledge and experience with Russian specialists in bracing and scoliosis treatment.

There was great happiness then, as the almost 80-year-old author of the brace was still alive and had been regularly spending golden autumn in Evpatoria for several years, where he taught and advised Ukrainian specialists. Cheneau personally was a very charming, very positive, very strong, and cheerful older man with a clear mind, despite the visible consequences of severe injuries he had sustained when his military medical helicopter crashed during the war in Indochina in 1954.

It turned out to be surprising that the highest award of France, the Order of the Legion of Honor, was bestowed on him not for such severe injuries in the service of his Fatherland but for the invention of the brace.

Cheneau spoke very little Russian, spoke well in Polish, and was excellent in German and English. He had a very positive attitude toward Russia and dreamed of visiting it even if his ancestor died in the Crimean War in 1854 in the Battle of Balaklava.

Chenault said that a popular Soviet song saved him from death because Vietnamese partisans, having heard him singing, did not beat to death the seriously wounded enemy, but carried him in their arms to the partisan hospital for many hours, saving his life. For a year in captivity in an earth pit with spiders and having severe injuries, Jacques also learned the Vietnamese language.

He was always an optimistic and cheerful person, despite the severe misfortune, as being the champion of France in water slalom, a popular hero of newspapers and fashion magazines, a handsome athlete with a mass of admirers; at the age of 27, he suddenly became a mutilated prisoner with a hole in his skull covered with a metal plate, with one leg shortened by explosion by 7 cm, and with fragments in the body.

Cheneau was very respectful of other person's competent opinion concerning professional issues, even if it did not coincide with his personal one, and discussions on the subject of the brace were peacefully conducted both on the beach and in the kitchen of the sea villa allocated to him in Evpatoria.

This was especially true for the aesthetic problem of the braces, motivation of children and parents, and feedback between them and the specialists involved in their conservative treatment.

Dr. Cheneau always mentioned that the very initial idea of the treatment method with a special cast and a brace that derotates the spine due to breathing was not his, but that of the American doctor, sculptor and painter Edwill Gerhardt Abbott (1871–1938), named Genius of Orthopedics back in 1913 at the congress in Berlin. However, the world war began, and doctors and prosthetists had no time to correct crooked children and provide braces for them, when there were millions of wounded and crippled people around who needed prostheses (during the New Economic Policy in Russia in the 1920s, one of the participants in that Berlin congress was Dr. Dukhovskoy, who practiced successfully in Moscow in Sokolniki the Abbott's method and described excellent results in the *Noviy Khirurgicheskiy Arkhiv* in 1929, and then he became the head of the prosthetic supply of the Red Army).

Cheneau's great contribution to the problem of scoliosis treatment is his rediscovery of the Abbott method for everyone, which he simplified. Subsequently, he created a concept and map of Cheneau zones for pressures and expansions in braces that were understandable to everyone. He adapted good ideas from other specialists, such as the use of low-density polyethylene pressure and vacuum to the manufacture of the brace.

Cheneau was really glad when he learned that the Russian Empress Catherine the Great suffered from severe scoliosis in childhood, and from the age of 8–14 years, wore successfully an iron brace made by the executioner of the city of Stettin, where her father was a burgomaster.

Cheneau believed that patients and parents should understand that wearing a brace is a treatment and can be outwardly completely unaesthetic and uncomfortable. However, this statement did not resonate with patients and parents; therefore, treatments were not successful.

Life has shown that being direct and honest in informing parents and patients about the severity of the complications of scoliosis and uncontested early use of aesthetic and hidden braces at the growth spurt stage are much more effective, which is possible and effective even for young gymnasts, swimmers, and ballet dancers.

Dr. Cheneau was famous worldwide. On his personal website, he had an impressive photo in which he was surrounded by several hundred Chinese doctors, standing in neat rows on a huge staircase, to take a group photo with Jean-Jacques Cheneau.

Only in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, the memory of Cheneau is preserved in the name of his brace, whereas Western colleagues preferred to develop the Cheneau method and brace under their names and trademarks in a competitive struggle (e.g., Rahmouni, Nahr, Gessingen, and RCS braces).

In 2008, Cheneau, already being chairbound, finally fulfilled his dream and visited Russia, including the specialized Turner and Albrecht institutions in St. Petersburg.

Eternal memory to a great friend of Russia and its people!

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