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In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Department of Infectious Diseases at the I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Sechenov University)

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ABSTRACT

This article is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Department of Infectious Diseases of the I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Sechenov University). This study examined key biographical information about department heads and achievements of teams at various historical stages. Currently, the department follows the educational policies of Sechenov University up to 2030. New educational programs in Russian and English are created for students. New teaching methodologies are implemented, talented students are engaged in student research on infectious diseases, interdisciplinary Olympiads are held, and conditions are formed to enhance student involvement in research and development activities to prepare competitive professionals with new professional competencies (research, interdisciplinary, and digital), capable of advancing science and new technologies.

Keywords: Department of Infectious Diseases; anniversary; I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Sechenov University).

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К 100-летию кафедры инфекционных болезней Первого МГМУ имени И.М. Сеченова (Сеченовский Университет)

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Статья посвящена 100-летию кафедры инфекционных болезней Первого Московского государственного медицинского университета имени И.М. Сеченова (Сеченовский Университет). Рассматриваются основные биографические сведения о заведующих кафедрой, направления деятельности и достижения коллективов на различных исторических этапах. В настоящее время кафедра следует цели в образовательной политике Сеченовского Университета к 2030 году: создаются новые образовательные программы для студентов, как на русском, так и на английском языках, внедряются новые методики преподавания, привлекаются талантливые студенты в студенческий научный кружок по инфекционным болезням, проводятся междисциплинарные олимпиады, формируются условия для роста вовлечённости обучающихся в проведение НИОКР для подготовки конкурентноспособных специалистов с новыми профессиональными компетенциями (исследовательскими, междисциплинарными, цифровыми), способных развивать науку и новые технологии.

Ключевые слова: кафедра инфекционных болезней; юбилей; Первый МГМУ имени И.М. Сеченова (Сеченовский Университет).

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On October 12, 1923, one of the first departments of infectious diseases in Russia was established at the Faculty of Medicine of the First Moscow University in the premises of Building 5 of the Botkin Hospital (formerly known as Soldatenkov's Hospital; Fig. 1).

In 2023, the Department of Infectious Diseases commemorated two notable anniversaries: the centenary of its establishment and the sesquicentenary of the birth of its first head, Mikhail P. Kireev (Fig. 2), who served in this position until 1936.

Mikhail P. Kireev was born in Moscow on October 4, 1873. He graduated from the Medical Faculty of Moscow University in 1899 and subsequently commenced employment as an assistant at Sokolnicheskaya Hospital.

From the outset of his medical career, Kireev demonstrated a keen interest in infectious diseases. At that time, this area of medicine was not yet recognized as a distinct discipline. At the Faculty of Medicine, infectious diseases were integrated into the broader curriculum of internal medicine.

In 1907, Kireev was appointed as Privat Associate Professor at Moscow University. Three years later, he assumed the role of the Head of the Infectious Diseases Department at Soldatenkov's Hospital, where he resided and worked until 1943. Kireev published approximately 70 scientific works, including the inaugural Manual on Infectious Diseases for Outpatient Physicians. His scientific research was primarily focused on typhus and nosocomial infections.

Due to Kireev's transfer to the Central Institute for Advanced Medical Education, the Department was headed by Boris A. Leshkov from 1936 to 1940 (Fig. 3). In accordance with the public health objectives of that time, the scientific topics focused on pediatric infections, typhoid fever, and epidemic meningitis.

Leshkov did much to strengthen the clinical base of the Department and improve the educational process. Under his leadership, the Department received a permanent clinical base in Building 5 of the Botkin City Clinical Hospital.

From 1940 to 1953, the Department of Infectious Diseases was led by Emmanuel E. Steinschneider (Fig. 4). The chairmanship of Steinschneider coincided with a pivotal



Fig. 1. Hospital named after S.T. Soldatenkova on the Khodynka field, 1913.

era in the country's history, that is, the Great Patriotic War. During this period, the department's staff repeatedly took part in the elimination of outbreaks of infectious diseases, both in Russia and abroad. The Department's scientific interests were reflected in the dissertation theses of I.G. Bulkina, K.V. Bunin, V.S. Starshinova, E.V. Leshchinskaya, N.K. Yakhontova, and others.

In 1953, the Head of the Department was appointed Konstantin V. Bunin (Fig. 5), a prominent scientist, a brilliant clinician, a talented organizer of medical science, a well-known public figure, and the creator of a large scientific school. He was an Academician of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and a Laureate of the State Prize of the USSR. Bunin was born on January 9, 1912, into a family of educators. He traversed a lengthy and arduous path in medicine, progressing from an ordinary physician to one of the nation's foremost infectious disease researchers.

From the first years of his chairmanship, Bunin devoted much skill and energy to improving the educational and methodological work and determining the scientific direction of the Department. During this period, the Department underwent significant restructuring, with the establishment of immunological, biochemical, and bacteriological laboratories. In a relatively short period of time, he managed to transform the Department into a leading scientific, educational,

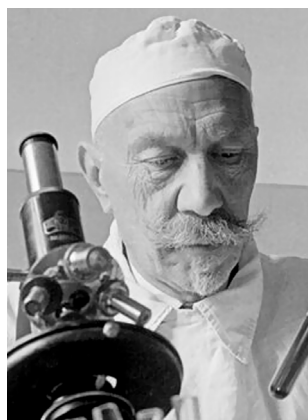


Fig. 2. Mikhail Petrovich Kireev.



Fig. 3. Boris Aleksandrovich Leshkov.



Fig. 4. Emmanuel Efimovich Steinschneider.



Fig. 5. Konstantin Vladimirovich Bunin.

and methodological center for infectious diseases. Advanced training courses in infectious diseases were also introduced.

Since 1964, the Department was located in the 2nd Moscow City Clinical Hospital of Infectious Diseases.

The scientific areas of interest of the Department, which was headed by Bunin, included two main sections: studies of the cardiovascular system in patients with acute infectious diseases and topical issues of clinical immunology. In particular, studies of the formation of the immune response in acute bacterial infectious diseases, the development and implementation of immunological diagnosis methods, and the principles of immunotherapy of patients with acute and chronic infectious diseases.

The Department was engaged in research on the immunological aspects of typhoid fever, dysentery, and salmonellosis, with a particular focus on the use of immunotherapy as a therapeutic modality. The studies devoted to cardiovascular disorders in the context of infectious processes, as well as in-depth studies of biochemical adaptation mechanisms in the liver, kidney, and endocrine regulation as a result of infectious diseases, were of significant practical importance.

Among the outstanding students of Bunin's school were V.I. Pokrovsky, Academician of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences (RAMS); Professor S.G. Pak, Corresponding Member of RAMS; Professors V.N. Nikiforov, V.L. Cherkasov, M.H. Turianov, A.I. Korte, M.A. Borisova, A.I. Chukavina, Y.M. Mikhailova, and others.

Bunin's creative activity benefited from a fruitful interplay between research and public work. From 1972 to 1979, he served as Chairman of the All-Union Scientific Society of Infectious Diseases, a member of the Bureau of Clinical Medicine of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, a member of the editorial board of the Clinical Medicine journal, and Editor-in-Chief of the Soviet Medicine journal. In 1974, Bunin was elected Vice-President of the Board of the International Society for the Study of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases.

In 1975, the Department underwent a structural reorganization. The Department of Infectious Diseases, under the direction of Sergei G. Pak, was separated from its original structure, whereas the Department of Medical Faculties continued to be headed by Bunin. This reorganization was necessitated by the increasing importance of the prophylactic direction in infectology, which required the training of appropriate personnel.

In 1985, a Laboratory for the Study of Toxic and Septic Conditions was established at the Department of Infectious Diseases, headed by Professor Pak.

After Bunin's death in 1986, Vsevolod L. Cherkasov, Doctor of Medical Sciences and Professor, took over as Head of the Department of Medical Faculties (Fig. 6).

During his chairmanship, the immunological direction in the study of pathogenesis, diagnosis, and treatment of streptococcal infection and acute intestinal infections was continued. Particular emphasis was placed on the

investigation of hemostasis in diverse pathomorphological manifestations of erysipelas. He is the author of the monograph *Erysipelas* (1986), which is still a reference book for contemporary medical practitioners and educators.

Cherkasov's most significant contribution is the implementation of a unified educational system for teaching infectious diseases at the Department.

In 1998, as part of rearrangement of the academic divisions within Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, the departments of medical and preventive faculties were merged into the Department of Infectious Diseases. The Department was subsequently led by Professor Pak, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, an Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, a laureate of the Prize of the Government of the Russian Federation, and the Honorary Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases of Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Fig. 7).

Professor Pak was born in Moscow on May 23, 1930. He was affiliated with the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University throughout his academic career, graduating with honors in 1954. He subsequently spent his entire professional life at the Department of Infectious Diseases, initially as a Clinical Resident, then as an Assistant, Associate Professor, Professor, and Head of the Department. Professor Pak identified the primary research focus of the Department as the study of the regularities of physiological functions of the macroorganism during the development of the infectious process. This allowed formulating a new concept of intoxication syndrome and developing new pathogenetic therapy directions for this syndrome in patients with infectious diseases. Pak was the supervisor of 10 doctoral and 41 candidate dissertations. He is the author of over 300 scientific works, including eight monographs, three textbooks, and one manual. He was granted three patents for inventions. Professor Pak was awarded a silver medal at the USSR All-Union Exhibition of Economic Achievements and a prize from the Government of the Russian Federation for a series of textbooks for medical universities.

Since October 1, 2011, the Department of Infectious Diseases has been led by Professor Elena Volchkova, an Honored Physician of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Medical Sciences (Fig. 8).

The entirety of Volchkova's scientific, pedagogical, and social endeavors, which commenced as a resident and culminated in her appointment as the Head of the Department, are intrinsically linked to the Department of Infectious Diseases of the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University.

Guided by Professor Volchkova, two doctoral and 17 candidate dissertations were completed and successfully defended. She is the author of over 180 scientific works, including two monographs, ten teaching aids, two textbooks, a manual for medical practitioners, a program, and a reference book on infectious diseases.



Fig. 6. Vsevolod Lvovich Cherkasov.



Fig. 7. Sergey Grigorievich Pak.



Fig. 8. Elena Vasilievna Volchkova.

The Department's educational policy aligns with Sechenov University's strategic objective for 2030, which is to produce a new graduate with a distinctive set of competencies, including universal, professional, and research skills, that are developed to a high standard.

The Department of Infectious Diseases has an annual enrollment of over two thousand students, with 2170 students enrolled in the 2022–2023 academic year. The Department welcomes students from seven different faculties, including international students from the Sklifosovsky Institute of Clinical Medicine.

The Department's contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic should not be overlooked. Like all healthcare workers, the staff of the Department faced a distinctive challenge and were to resolve a set of atypical issues. This necessitated rapid and proactive adaptation, the utilization of remote access and training, and the overcoming of the psychological perception of many students regarding the new conditions of the educational process. However, the Department promptly reorganized itself, establishing a temporary medical building where full-time training was conducted in accordance with distance learning regulations. Five mass open online courses were developed with the objective to facilitate distance learning. Additionally, online courses on socially significant infections and medical deontology were created. Furthermore, a course of lectures in Russian and English for students was recorded.

The Department's educational and methodological work benefited significantly from the contributions of Associate Professors Mikhail I. Karmanov, Irina P. Nechaeva, and Galina I. Anokhina. Under their guidance, the Department developed and published unique instructional manuals on all nosological forms, which are updated by the Department's staff in accordance with new research achievements in infectology. Moreover, the university's primary educational programs undergo continuous updates, and the assessment tool set within the 1C software suite is expanded and updated

accordingly. All educational and instructional materials are made available on the unified educational portal of Sechenov University.

The obligatory components of academic curricula are research, innovation, and project-based learning activities. These contribute to the expansion of individual educational opportunities and development pathways, as well as the establishment of a system of mechanisms to attract and support talented students.

The integration of students into scientific work and research is a key component of the university's long-term development plan. The Department is engaged in numerous research projects conducted in collaboration with students.

The formation of students' interest in science, teamwork skills, and professional competencies is facilitated by classes in the student scientific club, which has been headed by Associate Professor Nina N. Kanshina for many years. The Department offers competence-oriented master classes, which proved to be a source of consistent interest among students. During the 2023 academic year, approximately 600 students participated in these classes over three months. The curriculum incorporates a variety of pedagogical approaches, including the use of virtual case histories, the flipped classroom model, and interdisciplinary integration in student project activities.

As part of the Priority 2030 initiative, supplementary professional development programs are being introduced in an online format. These programs address both the most urgent issues related to infectious diseases, with a particular focus on human immunodeficiency virus, and to rare and challenging-to-diagnose medical conditions. Online courses are conducted for Russian and international students in English, with the objective of preparing students to conduct research and development and to acquire the skills necessary for a successful career in the era of digital transformation. This year, more than 500 students from various faculties, including 87 international students, completed such training

programs, which demonstrates that there is a demand for such courses.

The Department introduced an additional professional retraining program for doctors of various specialties, during which students acquire the professional competencies necessary for the new qualification of infectious disease doctor. This program was developed in accordance with professional standards; it is practice-oriented, and provides educational and methodological support in the form of an online course on the portal of additional education.

Taking into account the growth of infectious disease within the population, the advent of pandemics, and the emergence of novel infections, the Department of Infectious Diseases at Sechenov University identified training of competitive

specialists with advanced professional competencies — including research, interdisciplinary, and digital skills — as its primary objective. These professionals are expected to drive scientific advancement and the development of new technologies.

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