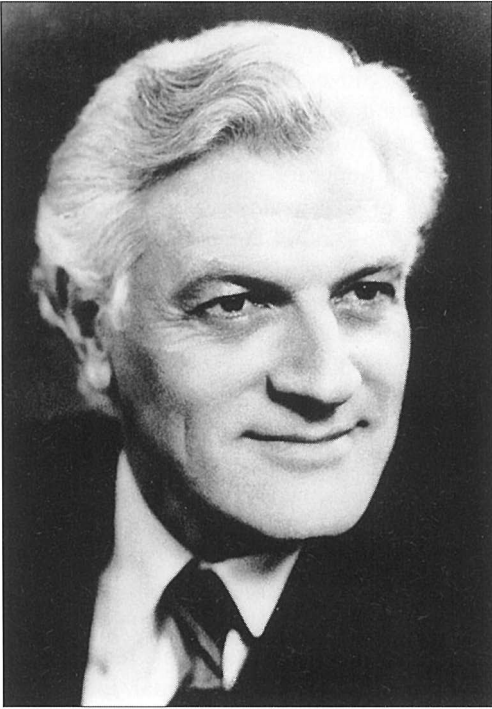


## Prof. Ivo Obrez, M.D., Ph.D. (1930-1989)



Ten years have passed since the death of Professor Ivo Obrez, head of the Institute of Radiology for many years, a teacher of several generations of Slovene radiologists, a founder of invasive and interventional radiology in Yugoslavia and Slovenia, and a researcher whose innovative work received wide international recognition.

Professor Ivo Obrez was born in Novo mesto in 1930. He graduated M.D. from the Faculty of Medicine in Ljubljana in 1955. He embarked on his radiology specialist training in 1958 and completed it in 1961. During the period 1961-1965 he headed the radiological unit of the Novo mesto General Hospital.

In 1963, during his study visit to Lund and Stockholm, where the first centralised radiological departments were set up, he witnessed an explosive development of modern radiology. There, he was introduced to the invasive angiocardiology, a special diagnostic technique to which he was devoting his limitless energy until his premature death. Professor Stanko Hernja, who headed the Institute of Radiology at the time, realised that it was necessary for his talented and ambitious colleague to forward his career in a larger medical centre. Professor Obrez accepted his invitation and in 1965 joined the Ljubljana Institute of Radiology.

After the initial impetus given to radiological science in Sweden, further advances in radiology were made in the U.S.A. Professor Obrez was convinced that radiologists from a relatively small and technologically inadequately developed country should extend and enhance their knowledge abroad, in institutions offering innovative programmes, and then apply the acquired knowledge to the radiological practice in their country. He, therefore, applied for the postdoctoral training post at the Stanford University, California, one of the leading medical centres in the world, which boasted an outstanding radiological department headed by Professor Margulis, a descendant of a Novi Sad family. Prompted by unconditional professional support given by Professor Hernja, hospital authorities in Ljubljana awarded Professor Obrez a scholarship for the proposed continuing education. The investment in his training paid off very soon. In the U.S.A., Professor Obrez was awarded the Newel Prize for his innovative

work. Immediately upon returning home, he set to introduce the new invasive angiocardiographic technique which was practically unknown at the time. He applied the knowledge and skills acquired in Sweden and the U.S.A. to the radiologists in Slovenia and Yugoslavia, pioneering routine use of catheterization of cardiac chambers and vessels. He unselfishly communicated his knowledge to his colleagues and soon brought together a team of competent invasive radiologists. Their close collaboration with clinicians, particularly with cardiovascular surgeons, resulted in markedly improved results of treatment in the University Medical Centre Ljubljana. In 1971, Professor Obrez and his co-workers from the Institute of Oncology won the Boris Kidrič award for their achievements in radiology. The same year, Professor Obrez defended his doctor's thesis »Renal angiography- A clinical and experimental study« at the Faculty of Medicine Ljubljana. The status of an Assistant Professor of Radiology was conferred on him in 1972. In 1973 he was elected lecturer at the Chair of Radiology, University of Ljubljana, and in 1979 Associate Professor of Radiology. He advanced to the rank of a Full Professor in Radiology in 1984.

In the 1970s it became evident that in the coming decades the trend in radiology would be towards interventional radiological techniques. In the school year 1971/72, Professor Obrez was staying at Stanford University as a visiting professor. On returning home, his primary aim was to initiate the new radiological procedures in Slovenia. The Ljubljana Institute of Radiology became a well-known teaching institution attracting prominent experts in interventional radiology from the whole territory of Yugoslavia. The development of radiology in the world continued at an extremely fast rate. To keep abreast of these advances, Professor Obrez held a visiting professorship at the Harvard University, Boston and at the University of California, San Francisco in the year 1981/82. His profes-

sional activities met with great acclaim. He was a member of the executive board of the European Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology, and its president for the period 1982-1983. In 1983, he organised the congress of European and American interventional radiologists in Dubrovnik, followed in 1984 by a very successful international symposium on contrast media and new technologies in radiology, which was held in Portorož, Slovenia. Professor Obrez was appointed a national representative in the bureau of European Association of Radiology in 1985, a honorary member of radiological societies of Czechoslovakia in 1981, of Hungary in 1984 and of Poland in 1986.

He was a member of the editorial boards of the following professional journals: *Zdravstveni vestnik*, *Radiologia Jugoslavica*, *Radiologia Diagnostica*, *Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology*, *European Journal of Radiology*, *Der Radiologe*, *Frontiers in European Radiology* and *Annales de Radiologie*.

His bibliography includes more than one hundred papers published in the national and international literature. He contributed a number of chapters on radiology to professional manuals and handbooks. He was one of the pioneers of interventional radiology at the national and international levels, as shown by his numerous contributions to renowned international journals, such as *Radiology*, *Investigative Radiology*, *Journal of Canadian Association of Radiology*, most of them written together with the most distinguished experts in the field, like Professor Abrams.

During the period 1974-1989, Professor Obrez headed the Institute of Radiology in Ljubljana. After the restructuring of the University Medical Centre he was appointed a director of the Institute, and he held this office until his premature death in 1989. His taking office at the Institute of Radiology coincided with the moving of the Institute to new premises which boasted modern techno-

logical equipment. His predecessor, Professor Hernja, had set up a modern centralised radiological department separated into several diagnostic units according to the Swedish model. Professor Obrez continued with establishing the CT, ultrasound and cardiovascular radiology units, and with renovating the units at other locations. With great dedication and tenacity he strove to get quality technological equipment for the Institute and to ensure the funds required for its work. Like his predecessors, he frequently fought bureaucratic battles with those who tended to lessen the role of radiology in the clinical medicine.

Professor Obrez initiated a number of modern diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, many of which are still in routine use today. Also, he attracted and trained a skilled team of specialists who successfully carried on his work in the interventional radiology. Professor Obrez was known as an excellent teacher. His meticulously prepared lectures were admired not only for their high professional standard but also for the visual experience they provided.

Professor Obrez devoted the largest share of his time and energy to radiology, yet his interests were not restricted only to the field

of medicine. History was his main interest away from hospital, and he intended to pursue his hobby after the retirement. Yet, his early death prevented him from carrying out his plans.

Professor Obrez will always be remembered as an outstanding radiologist and a Slovene intellectual with international reputation. Thanks to his professional excellence, language skills, and self-confidence and warmth in his behaviour towards other people he easily made friends world-wide. He was a true ambassador of Slovenia in the world.

Professor Obrez occupies a very special place in the history of Slovene medicine. In the memory of his colleagues who had the fortune to meet him and to work with him he will always stay as an understanding colleague, outstanding teacher and talented radiologist who had made invaluable contributions to the development of radiological science. His work constitutes a firm foundation on which we continue to build the edifice of modern radiology.

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