

History of Contemporary Medicine

Remembering Professor Amir Hossein Mehregan (1931–2000); the Great Iranian Dermatopathologist

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Professor Amir Hossein Mehregan

Professor Amir Hossein Mehregan was a great Iranian physician and medical scholar who played a major role in development and progress of dermatopathology. He was born on June 12, 1931 in Tehran in an educated family. His father; Ali Mehregan was the first mayor of Shemiran in north of Tehran, located on the slopes of Alborz Mountains.

Amir Hossein studied in Kherad School and Sharaf and Alborz high schools and in due course, he enrolled in Tehran University Medical School in September 1948. At that time, he was one of the 240 candidates among 1000 applicants who entered the Tehran School of Medicine. In 1955, at age 24, Amir Hossein graduated from the Tehran School of Medicine and in the same year, he went to the USA as a young physician to continue his postgraduate medical training.¹

In the USA, Dr. Mehregan initially completed a two-year dermatology residency program in the Skin and Cancer Hospital of Philadelphia, where he studied carefully the valuable collection of pathological slides and became interested in skin pathology, a profession that he sustained until the end of his fruitful life.

He continued his third year of dermatology residency program at the Wisconsin University in Madison. At that time, Dr. Sture Johnson was the Chair of the Department. In the autobiography that Dr. Mehregan wrote several years before he passed away, he stated that: “In the middle of my second year in Philadelphia, I decided to go somewhere else. I applied for a third year residency

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in the University of Wisconsin Hospital and was accepted. In the end of June of 1958, I packed my car and left Philadelphia for Madison, Wisconsin. Summer in Madison was beautiful. The outpatient clinic was not very busy but we always had interesting patients hospitalized. While in Philadelphia, I went through the entire file of dermatopathology slides in the hospital and had learned quite well. In Madison, my Chief, Dr. Sture Johnson was impressed with my knowledge of dermatopathology and wanted me to look at all the skin biopsies.”

There was a turning point in Dr. Mehregan’s academic life in 1958, when he participated in a conference held at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and met Professor Hermann Pinkus (1905–1985), one of the pioneers of dermatopathology (Figure 1). He told him of his interest in dermatopathology and Dr. Pinkus offered him a two-year fellowship at the Wayne State University Medical School in Detroit.



Figure 1. Professor Hermann Pinkus (**Source of photo:** Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology September 1980).²

In his autobiography, he has written that: “I attended the O’Leary meeting in Mayo Clinic and met Dr. Hermann Pinkus whom I knew from his many publications. I asked him if he would have a position for me to study dermatopathology and at the same time applied for the Osborne Fellowship in Dermatopathology in the Armed Forces Institute. Several weeks later and almost at the same time, I received two letters, one from Dr. Pinkus stating that he has a place for me in Wayne State University and the other from the Armed Forces Institute that Osborne Fellowship is available. I went to Dr. Johnson and asked for his advice. He suggested that I should go to Dr. Pinkus and I have always been grateful for his guiding me in that direction.” For the next 26 years, he had close cooperation with Dr. Pinkus.

In the winter of 1959, he married Virginia Sahr (1936–2009),

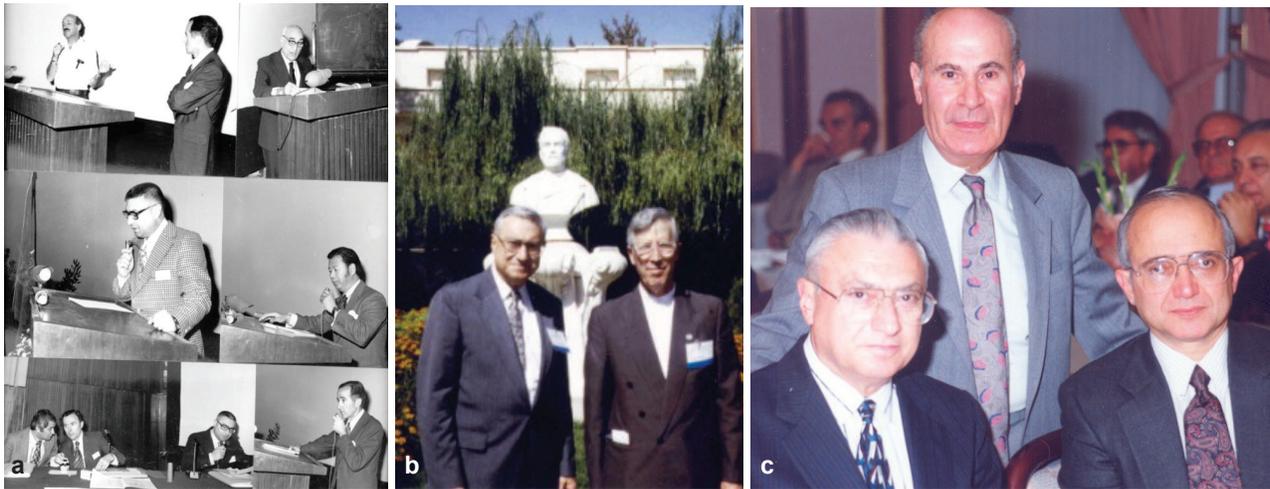


Figure 2. a) The Sixth Medical Congress in Shiraz, April 19–24, 1975. Dr. Mehregan is seen in the second row, standing on the left side and in the third row, sitting in the middle. (Courtesy of Professor David Mehregan) b) Dr. Mehregan and Dr. Y. Dowlati. c) Dr. Mehregan, sitting on the left side, standing: Dr. Arsalan Yamini (Courtesy of Professor David Mehregan).

a registered nurse working at the University of Wisconsin Medical Center. In 1961, Dr. Mehregan successfully finished his post-graduate training in dermatology at the Wayne State University Medical School and came back to Iran and went to Shiraz. In this regard, he stated that: “In the second year of my fellowship, we started to prepare for our return to Tehran. I had already a position secured in the Nemazee Hospital in Shiraz. We packed some 1800 pounds of households all professionally crated in addition to having our car packed and shipped everything ahead of our departure. We left Detroit for Tehran in early July of 1961. We arrived in Tehran in the heat of the summer and were greeted by all family members. After two weeks of visitation in which everyone came to see us several times, I started to look for a job. Initially, I was interested in a university position and found nothing available. My other option in Tehran was to start a private practice. In the meantime, Dr. Alavi and his wife Jamileh, also a physician came to see us and convinced us that living in Shiraz will be more pleasant than in Tehran and suggested that I should accept the position in Nemazee Hospital where they were both employed. In 1961, Iran was in an economic recession. The price of a barrel of oil was 79 cents and not much funding was available. We decided to give Nemazee Hospital a try and in the end of summer, we moved to the compound of the Hospital in the beautiful city of Shiraz. In my position in Nemazee, I was not very busy so I spent several afternoons in a free clinic in the University Hospital where a large number of patients were seen. I was also asked to give a series of lectures in Shiraz University Medical School.” According to Dr. H. Mortazavi, et al. at that time: “He played an important role in establishing the modern aspects of dermatology and dermatological education at Shiraz University as well as other institutions.”³ In subsequent years, Professor Mehregan attended several medical meetings in Iran (Figure 2).

Publications

Dr. Mehregan was a prolific writer and a great researcher and between 1961 and 1999, he published 215 original articles. His articles were mainly published in prestigious international and American journals of dermatology or dermatopathology. Dr. Mehregan and Professor Pinkus published several joint papers on dermatology.

From 1969 to 1995, he was the author or co-author of several books. In 1969, an influential book entitled “A Guide to Dermatohistopathology” was published by Pinkus and Mehregan (Figure 3).⁴

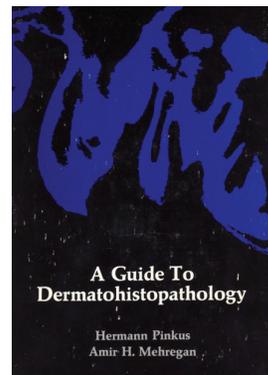


Figure 3. The front cover of the first edition of “Pinkus’ Guide to Dermatohistopathology”, 1969.

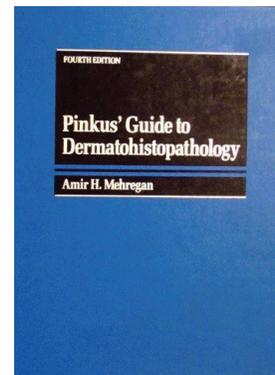


Figure 4. The front cover of the fourth edition of the book, 1986.

This book was reprinted several times before and after Pinkus’ death in 1985 (Figure 4). The sixth edition was published in 1995 by Dr. Mehregan and his two sons, David and Daruis Mehregan (both dermatopathologists) and Dr. K. Hashimoto as co-authors.⁵ In memory of Professor Pinkus, Dr. Mehregan changed the name of the of the book to: “Pinkus’ Guide to Dermatohistopathology”.

Other books or chapters of books authored or co-authored by Dr. Mehregan are:

- Mehregan AH, Mirshamsi Y: Pigmented lesions, Benign and Malignant. In Current Dermatologic Management, 1970.
- Mehregan AH: Transepithelial elimination. In Current Problems in Dermatology. Vol. 3, 1970.
- Pinkus H, Mehregan AH: Tumoren der Haut. In Spezielle Pathologische [in German], Vol.7, Berlin, 1973.
- Mehregan AH: Reactive Perforating Collagenosis. In Dermis-Dobson-McGuire Clinical Dermatology, 1982.
- Mehregan AH: Tissue Reactions. In Dermatologic immunol-



Figure 5. Professor A. H. Mehregan (*) and Moslem Bahadori (**), Professor of Pathology of Tehran University among their classmates in Tehran-Iran. Several graduates of Tehran Medical School of the year 1955 are seen.

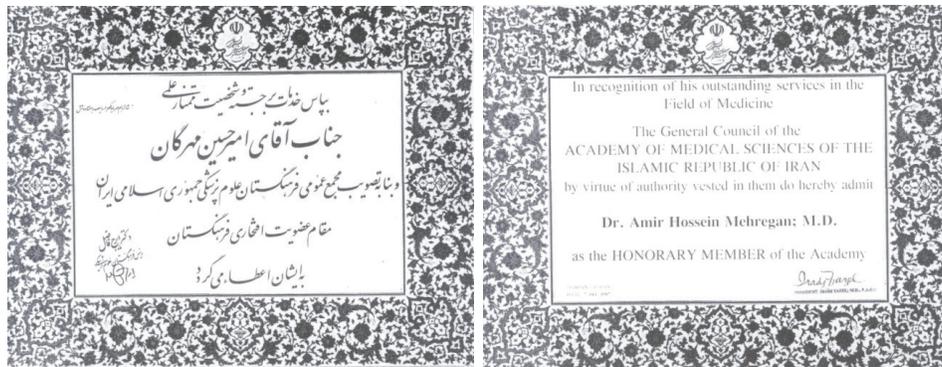


Figure 6. Dr. Mehregan, the Honorary Member of the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences, 1977.

ogy and Allergy, 1985.

- Hashimoto K, Mehregan AH, Kumakiri M: Tumors of Epidermis, 1990.

From the beginning of his professional career, Professor Mehregan received several awards including: Michigan Dermatological Society Essay Award (1961), American Academy of Dermatology Scientific Exhibit Award (1962), Chicago Dermatological Society Essay Award (1965), and American Academy of Dermatology Medical Art Exhibit Award (1971).

Professor Mehregan welcomed many researchers from all over the world to his Pinkus Dermatopathology Laboratory in Monroe. In addition, he had a close cooperation with Iranian dermatologists and other medical professionals (Figure 5) and in 1977, he was appointed as the Honorary Member of the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences⁶ (Figure 6).

Professor Amir Hossein Mehregan is survived by his four children and grandchildren. His two sons, David and Daruis (Figure 7), followed the same career path as their father. Dr. David Mehregan is a distinguished dermatopathologist who joined his father's practice in 1991 and now he is Professor and Harold E. Usendek Endowed Chair in Dermatology, Residency Program Director at Department of Dermatology of the Wayne State University. Dr. Darius Mehregan is a dermatologist specializing in skin oncology and dermatopathology who joined his father's practice in 1995

and serves as the Hermann Pinkus Chair of the department. Robert, his youngest son, is a graduate of electrical engineering. His daughter, Suzanne is a graduate in accounting.⁷



Figure 7. From left to right: Professor A. H. Mehregan and his sons, Daruis and David at a meeting of the American Society of Dermatopathology, 1990 (Courtesy of Professor David Mehregan).

The late Professor A. H. Mehregan was a real scientist, an excellent physician, a superior mentor, a good father and an active multidimensional figure with several personal interests including history, archeology and literature books and loved fishing (Figure 8).

He passed away on September 28, 2000, at age 69 because of a brain tumor and was buried in the Saint Joseph Cemetery, Monroe, Michigan, USA. His demise was a great loss to the scientific community especially in the field of dermatopathology.



Figure 8. A photo of Professor Mehregan while fishing (Courtesy of Professor David Mehregan).

Acknowledgment

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