

History of Contemporary Medicine

A Brief History of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology in Iran

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This is a brief look at the establishment and development of oral and maxillofacial pathology in Iran. The program of the oral and maxillofacial pathology at first was integrated into the curriculum of the Dental School of Tehran University in 1960. The Iranian Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathologists was officially founded in 1999.

Keywords: History of medicine, Iran, Oral and maxillofacial pathology, Oral medicine

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Introduction

Since the establishment of oral medicine as a part of general medicine at the Dar-al-Fonun School founded in 1851, there was no independent pathology course in the curriculum of this medical school and it was not even offered as a practical service. In 1934, when the University of Tehran was established, three schools (medical, dental, and pharmacy) began to exist. Before that, at the beginning of the independent medical school (Madrese-ye Tebb, 1928) establishment, pathology as a general subject was also taught. However, general pathology as a separate subject in the curriculum of medical school was only started later by Dr. Mostafa Habibi Golpayegani (1904–1948).

Dr. Mostafa Habibi Golpayegani was among the students who were sent by the Iranian government to France to study medicine. When he graduated from Paris Medical School, continued his post graduate training in pathology and returned to Iran in 1936 and started to teach pathology to medical students of Tehran University.

In 1939, Professor Charles Oberling (1895–1960), a Paris University pathologist, was employed by the Iranian government as the Medical School Dean at Tehran University. He made tremendous updates in the organization, administration, and contents of the medical school program. Professor Oberling invited Dr Habibi to chair the division of pathology, histology and embryology. With the help of Dr. Oberling, Dr Habibi made essential changes including hiring new faculty, writing books, establishing practical and teaching laboratories and training technicians. Later, he was assigned to chair the anatomical pathology division. In 1948, Professor Habibi passed away in 1948 and two of his associates, Professor Kamaleddin Armin (1914–1995) and Professor Hossein Rahamatian expanded the department. Until 1959, the department of anatomical pathology took the duties of teaching and practicing pathology for both the medical and dental schools. There was no curriculum for

oral and maxillofacial pathology in the school of dentistry. In that period, Professor K. Armin was the chairman of the department of pathology and took over all duties in both schools.^{1,2}

Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Dr. Ismail Yazdi as Founder

Dr. Ismail Yazdi, a graduate from the school of dentistry at Tehran University was sent to the United States for further training. He studied both oral and maxillofacial surgery and pathology. After finishing his postgraduate studies, he returned to Iran. On his return, Professor Kamaleddin Armin, the chairman of the department of pathology at Tehran University, called him and went through his academic records and offered him to join the department of pathology to establish oral and maxillofacial pathology as a new division. In a brief discussion, Professor Armin said: “I was looking for someone with your capacity and background for our department”. Thus, Dr Yazdi became an affiliated member of the department of general pathology in charge of establishing the division of oral and maxillofacial pathology. After approval of Dr Yazdi, Professor Armin discussed with Professor Mohsen Sayyah, the Dean of the Dental School of Tehran University, and convinced him of the necessity of the oral and maxillofacial pathology to be included in the curriculum of the dental school. Accordingly, with the assistance of Dr. Sayyah and Professor Armin, Tehran University approved the new proposal and Dr. Yazdi started to establish the oral and maxillofacial pathology division in the Dental School.³

From then on, the program of the oral and maxillofacial pathology was, for the first time in Iran, integrated into the curriculum of the Dental School of Tehran University in 1960. At first, it started with lectures as two credits. Later, the credits increased to three and four (including practical oral and maxillofacial pathology) in the course of dental

medicine. Dr Yazdi wrote a text on oral and maxillofacial pathology for dental students. The text consisted of topics almost similar to all those being taught in most American dental schools. Yet, oral and maxillofacial pathology was only a part of the general pathology department in the school of medicine. In 1966, due to further activity in the division of oral and maxillofacial pathology, more facilities were needed. Thus, the oral and maxillofacial pathology division moved into the dental school and became an independent department at the Tehran University School of Dentistry. Upon Dr Yazdi's request, Professor Armin generously supplied the new founded department, not only with the fundamental equipment and facilities, but also provided two of three autopsy room spaces of their own laboratory for establishing oral and maxillofacial pathology laboratory. He also allowed two of their technicians, Mrs. Salary and Mrs. Rahmani to remain with oral and maxillofacial pathology laboratory and help till needed.

As can be imagined, at the beginning, there were many problems in organizing an independent department, including budget, qualified technicians, adequate teaching man power, and more than anything, was the recognition of oral and maxillofacial pathology among medical and dental authorities as a separate independent field. All these discrepancies were solved by Dr Yazdi and fortunately the dental students of the school supported and anxiously helped the department to succeed. Fortunately, obstacles were gradually eradicated and the project succeeded. The department was founded and oral and maxillofacial pathology laboratory was established, shaped and began to function: giving services, preparing microscopic slides for the dental students in practical classes, recovering biopsies, processing and reporting. Pathology reports were archived and organized in yearly order and became a valuable and handy collection of thousands of pathology reports, including various kinds of oral lesions and precious material for researchers and residents. For the first time in 1962, oral and maxillofacial pathology was accepted as a specialty of dentistry in Iran and legally established on a minimum three years training and postgraduate study, including a research dissertation, and accepted residents for oral and maxillofacial pathology. After completing training and educational requirements, the candidates became board eligible. The board examination included both written and microscopic section interpretation. Those who passed the exam, received an equivalent board diploma.⁴

The residents of oral and maxillofacial pathology, for practical training, reading microscopic slides and biopsy reports in general pathology, were referred to the Cancer Institute, affiliated with the Medical School of Tehran University. At the Cancer Institute, they were under the supervision of Professor Zia Shamsa for one semester in their second year of training.

The first two residents were Dr. Bahram Noparast and Dr Manoochehr Mirlohi. The latter was sent by the Army Health Department. He completed the training course satisfactorily and received a certificate and returned to the Army. Dr Noparast, as the first resident, passed the courses

and received a board certificate from Tehran University in 1971. In due course, Dr Noparast was employed by the Tehran University as an Assistant Professor in oral and maxillofacial pathology and later promoted to associate professor. After a few years of service, Dr Noparast left Iran for the United States and started teaching at the Lomolinda University Dental School.

To gain more experience and benefits of exchanging ideas and scientific knowledge, the international dignitaries related to oral and maxillofacial pathology were invited to spend some time in Iran in the oral and maxillofacial pathology department. There were annual increase in the applicants for residency in the department and many good pathologists were trained in the department, including Dr. Aghdas Forouzandeh, Dr. Mohammad Eslami, Dr. Fereshteh Baghaiee, Dr. Nosratollah Eshghyar, Dr. Mojgan Ghazi, Dr. Maryam Khalili, Dr. Nasim Taghavi, Pooria Mottahari and many others. Most of these specialists later became faculty members of oral and maxillofacial pathology of other schools of dentistry in Iran and developed new departments at their respective schools.

After establishing the department of oral and maxillofacial pathology in the University of Tehran, several other newly established schools of dentistry have developed their own department of oral and maxillofacial pathology. At the present time, nearly all approved dental schools in Iran have developed departments of oral and maxillofacial pathology and/ or training program for oral and maxillofacial pathologists.

Iranian Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathologists

By increasing the number of qualified oral and maxillofacial pathologists, with the help of Professor Yazdi, the Iranian Society of oral and maxillofacial pathologists was officially founded in 1999. Founders of the society, in alphabetic order, were as follows: Dr. M. Eslami, Dr. F. Baghaiee, Dr. Stepan Alexanian, Dr. N. Eshghyar, Dr. A. Forouzandeh and Dr. Ismail Yazdi. The first elected board of directors includes: Dr. Ismail Yazdi (president), Dr. Sirus Etesam Yazdani (vice-president), Dr. Mohammad Eslami (secretary), Dr. Behnam Eslami (treasurer), Dr. Maryam Khalili (scientific affairs), and Dr. Nosratollah Eshghyar (Inspector).

The society has continued its efforts toward expansion of scientific activity, conducts an annual congress and annual election, etc. Thus, a great reputation and improvement in teaching activities and research have been established. It has now a considerable number of active members with great interest in improving their scientific achievements.⁵⁻⁹ The Journal of "Oral Pathology and Oral Surgery" was published by Professor Yazdi in 1965.¹⁰

In conclusion, oral and maxillofacial pathology in Iran was initiated and founded by Professor Ismail Yazdi in 1960, at the School of Dental Medicine of Tehran University. Oral and maxillofacial pathology became a tree, which was planted in Iran through the activity and efforts of Professor Yazdi and was rooted by his graduates and qualified colleagues in over 60 dental schools in Iran.



Professor Ismail Yazdi (b. 25 April 1931).



Archives of several thousand biopsy reports in yearly order collection by Prof. Yazdi, 1999.



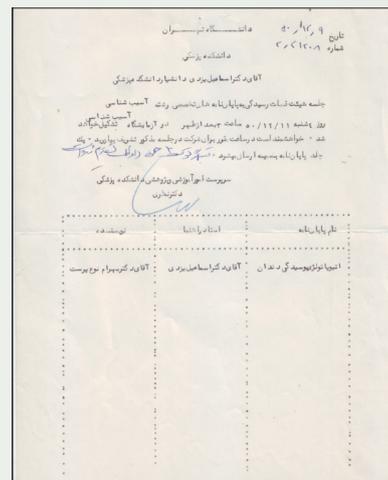
Prof. K. Armin and Prof. I. Yazdi



Visiting Prof. Gordan Agnew (from USA). From left: Dr. Mirlouhi, Dr. Noparast, Prof. Agnew, and Prof. Yazdi, 1966–1967.



The first founded laboratory in Iran for oral pathology, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, School of Dentistry, 1966. In the sitting right: Mrs. Mirfatheraie, technician.



Research dissertation session. Dr. Noparast for receiving board diploma (1971).



Prof. Armin receiving appreciation award from oral pathology department, 1993. From left: Dr. Pardis, Prof. Shams Shariat Torbaghan, Prof. Yazdi, Dr. M. Eslami, Dr. N. Eshghyar, and Prof. K. Armin



First biopsy report. Dr. Noparast as assistant, 1966.



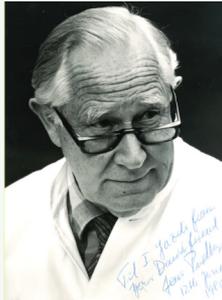
Visiting Prof. Don Lyon (from USA) and Prof. Yazdi, 1967–1968.



Visiting Prof. Genis Pindborg, from Denmark. Tehran, 1978.



R. Jahan shahi dissertation presentation session. From left: Dr. Baghaei, Dr. Froozandeh, Dr. Gholamreza Jahanshi, Dr. Eshghyar, Prof. Yazdi, and Dr. Eslami, 1987.



Prof. Genis Pindborg, leading professor associated with WHO, visiting the department of oral and maxillofacial pathology, June 1978 (photo donated to Prof. Yazdi).



Residents' Journal Club, Department of the Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Dental School, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.



Dr. Eshghyar, dissertation presentation session, 1987. From left: Dr. M. Eslami, Dr. Eshghyar, Prof. Yazdi, Prof. Shams Shariat Torbaghan.



The 6 th International Congress on Oral Cancer, India. Prof. Yazdi delivering a lecture, 1999.



Prof. Yazdi and Dr. Baghaee dissertation presentation session, 1988

Authors' Contribution

The authors contributed to the conception and design of the manuscript, data collection, writing and approval of the final version.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Statement

Not applicable.

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