



In Memory of Prof. Dr. med. Antonios Valavanis

(* 20.01.1952–† 30.05.2023)

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In the name of the Swiss Society of Neuroradiology (SSNR) we are sad to communicate the passing of one of its founding members, its honorary member and past president, Prof. Antonios Valavanis (Fig. 1). In 1988 he cofounded together with O. Schubiger, P. Huber and E.W. Radü the SSNR, and he was President of the Society for two periods, from 1993 to 1999 and from 2001 to 2010. He has a long and illustrious career behind him: in 1994 he was appointed titular professor at the University of Zurich and head of the Clinic of Neuroradiology at Zurich University Hospital (USZ). This was for Switzerland an important event and thereafter neuroradiological clinics and units would be established in the main centers in Switzerland. Together with Prof. Peter Huber from Bern, he is considered one of the founding fathers of neuroradiology and the founder of one of its main historical branches.

Prof. A. Valavanis was born in Athens, Greece, he completed his training in radiology (Prof. J. Wellauer) and neuroradiology at the University Hospital of Zurich, where he became assistant professor in 1984 and full professor in 1994. He was chairman of the Institute for Neuroradiology at University Hospital of Zurich until his retirement in 2017. He would enter our field at a time when neuroradiology would undergo radical methodological changes, when methods such as pneumoencephalography would be replaced by computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging techniques, and when angiographic techniques using new catheters would allow him and others to enter the new era of interventional neuroradiological techniques. This would among others be accelerated by the development of

embolization techniques and materials in order to achieve new diagnostic and therapeutic strategies. One of his focuses would therefore be the minimally invasive treatment of cerebrovascular diseases. He always saw neuroradiology as a whole and would see neuroradiology as a full specialty with two branches, diagnostic and interventional. While his main focus was interventional neuroradiology, he still held diagnostic neuroradiology in high regard with the help of his team, among others Prof. Werner Wichmann, who also recently passed away. His bibliography would encompass neuroradiology as a whole and in that context he published the book *Clinical imaging of the cerebello-pontine angle* with O. Schubiger and T. Naidich; however, his main clinical interest was the study of complex cerebrovascular diseases such as arteriovenous malformations, which improved our understanding both from an anatomic point of view as well as from the architectonic implications this knowledge would have on our understanding and treatment of these very often complex and mysterious pathologies. He published the book *Interventional neuroradiology* on this topic, which remains an important contribution to our field.

Indeed, as an academic leader, his scientific output has extensively covered the field of neuroradiology and he has authored or co-authored 200 papers covering the whole field of neuroradiology. Together with world-renowned specialists, such as the neurosurgeon Profs. G. Yasargil and the head and neck surgeon U. Fisch, he would place Zurich as one of the world's leading centers for interventional neuroradiology for diseases of the brain and head and neck pathologies. In the early 1980s he was among the first in the world to introduce the use of interventional techniques for lesions of the central nervous system, using both new catheters and new materials to treat vascular diseases of the brain, head and neck regions. Together with his clinical colleagues, he helped to establish neuroradiology as a fully

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Fig. 1 Prof. Dr. med. Antonios Valavanis (photograph © Swiss Society of Neuroradiology, with kind permission)

clinically based speciality. He would therefore be the recipient of multiple prizes and honours on a national and international level. Early in his career, in 1983 he won the European Society of Neuroradiology (ESNR) Science Prize; later on he would be the President of the 17th Congress of the European Society of Neuroradiology in Zurich in 1991, held together with the international congress of head and neck radiology and the first congress of the World Federation of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology. In parallel to all his clinical and academic activities, he also established the popular long-running Zurich Course on In-

terventional Neuroradiology attended by neuroradiologists from all over the world. Resulting from his contribution to Swiss neuroradiology, in 2018 he was appointed honorary member of the Swiss Society for Neuroradiology. In addition, he served on multiple committees in various national and international societies as well as editorial boards in our speciality. He was special consultant to the American Journal of Neuroradiology (AJNR) and on the editorial board of Neuroradiology. He would found the journal *Neuroradiologia Helvetica* as well as be instrumental in the founding of the journal *Clinical and Translations Neuroscience*. He went on to found the Clinical Neurocenter in Zurich, on whose governing board he was active until recently and also to co-found and preside over the Swiss Federation of Clinical Neurosciences (SFCNS). He was also an honorary member of the Hellenic Radiological Society since 1991 and was the recipient of the James Bull medal of the British Society of Neuroradiology in 1998. In addition to being our honorary member, the Swiss Society for Neuroradiology established the Anton Valavanis Medal in his honour, the first two recipients being Profs. Luc Picard and Georges Rodesch (both from France) and highly ranked neuroradiologists. The newly opened angio-room at the USZ was also named in his honour in October 2021.

In conclusion, he has been a leader and a pioneer in making neuroradiology a central part of clinical neurosciences. His legacy in Switzerland and outside the country has been immense and he will be missed by us all. We extend our condolences to his closest relatives and friends.