A TURKISH DOCTOR WHOSE NAME WAS GIVEN TO A DISEASE

HULUSİ BEHÇET

1889 – 1948

With careful observations from 1929 onwards, he found out that various symptoms of the skin, the eye and the internal organs attributed to different diseases were actually the different manifestations of a specific disease. During the International Dermatology Congress assembled at Geneva on September 13th, 1947, Hulusi Behçet’s thesis about various cases with evidences of mouth and genital ulcers and infection of the eyes was acknowledged as a new disease of viral origin. Also, on the proposal of Dr. Miescher, a dermatology professor of the Zurich Medical School, the disease was named “MORBUS BEHÇET” (Behçet’s Disease).

He described a sign related to the skin lesion of leishmaniasis, called the pin sign. After international disputes, it was named “Behçet’s Sign.”

The diathermic therapy method he used to cure leishmaniasis was welcomed and practised in many countries.

He observed and described the dark skin lesions seen in people working at fig processing units, and found that they were caused by the sap of figs. He published his observations and named the lesion as "the raw fig dermatitis".

He found out that the parasite pediculode ventricosus caused a specific skin lesion. This lesion was already recognized by the farmers and was thought to be caused by the fermentation of barley and hence named in Turkish as "Arpa Karşıtı".

He described new forms of the actinomycoses family that resided in meat and caused superficial eczematous lesions on the skin. After his findings were tested and accepted by the laboratories in Paris and Budapest, he was given an award by the International Dermatology Congress assembled at Budapest in 1935.

He wrote more than 100 articles and international congress papers. He published books on dermatology and specially syphilis.

He was on the editing board of the international dermatology journal Dermatologische Wochenschrift; and the editor of the journal Dermatologica.

From 1934 to 1947, till near his death, he published the first Turkish journal of dermatology, Deri Hastalıkları ve Frengi Kliniği Arşivi.

1910 Graduated from the Istanbul University, Medical School.
1914 Worked at the Gülhane Dermatology Clinic as an assistant to Esref Rüşen, Talat Çamlı and the bacteriologist Reşat Rıza.
1914-1918 Appointed as a dermatologist to the Military Hospitals in Thrace.
1918-1923 Studied at Budapest and at the Charite Hospital’s Dermatology and Syphilology clinic in Berlin.
1923 Director of the Hasköy Venereal Disease Hospital; dermatologist at the Gureba Hospital.
1933 Became a professor and head of the Dermatology and Syphilology Clinic of Istanbul University Medical School.
1975 In honour of his memory, Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Organization (TUBITAK) was established and awarded in the name of Hulusi Behçet.