

60 Years of the Third Medical Department of the First Faculty of Medicine and General Teaching Hospital

Svačina S., Sucharda P.

Third Medical Department – Clinical Department of Endocrinology
and Metabolism of the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University
in Prague, and General Teaching Hospital, Czech Republic

Received July 25, 2005, Accepted October 7, 2005

Mailing address: Prof. Štěpán Svačina, MD., DSc., MBA, Third Medical
Department of the First Faculty of Medicine and General Teaching Hospital,
U Nemocnice 1, 128 08 Prague 2, Czech Republic, Phone: +420 224 912 922,
e-mail: stepan.svacina@lf1.cuni.cz

When Professor Josef Charvát moved into the premises of one of the German clinics of the General Hospital on May 9, 1945, the spectrum of patients was uncommonly broad – from patients wounded in the uprising to people returning from concentration camps and forced labor. It was understood at that time that an internal clinic should provide the whole range of specialized care. Nonetheless, since prof. Charvát was the most prominent Czech endocrinologist – actually the founder of this specialization in the country – it was natural for diagnostically and therapeutically difficult endocrinology and metabolism cases to converge on the clinic. The number of significant personalities working at Charvát's clinic in the first decades included prof. Engelberth, prof. Küchel, who emigrated in 1968, later assoc. prof. Otakar Bleh, assoc. prof. Eva Šilinková-Málková, prof. Jaroslav Páv, prof. Jiří Šonka and, of course, prof. Vratislav Schreiber, neuroendocrinologist of world renown.

In the 1960s, the clinic continued to admit a broad range of patients with internal diseases and enjoyed the reputation of an excellent diagnostic center. The center acquired the former military (“division”) hospital (formerly a Jesuit college from the 17th to 18th century), which has now become identified with the Third Medical Department – Clinical Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism.

It was not until the 1970s that the clinic started strengthening its profile as a cardiological center; one of the first coronary units in Czechoslovakia was established here and the clinic became the home of a significant echocardiographic training center, represented by prof. Petrášek, prof. Hradec and assoc. prof. Král. At that time leadership of the clinic was taken over after prof. Charvát by prof. Vladimír Pacovský, who guided the clinic through the difficult period of the 1970s and 1980s without compromising its prestige; he made possible the professional growth of the whole current middle-age generation of leading clinicians and researchers.

In 1990–2001, the clinic was headed by prof. Josef Marek, excellent clinical endocrinologist, focused especially on diseases of the hypophysis. He takes credit for excellent cooperation with neurosurgical centers, especially the neurosurgical clinic of the Central Military Hospital.

Since 2001, prof. Štěpán Svačina, dean of the First Faculty of Medicine in 1999–2005, has been the head of the Third Medical Department. Under his leadership focus has strengthened on endocrinology and metabolic issues as well as on preventive cardiology.

Currently, the clinic is specializing in diagnostics and therapy of diseases in the field of endocrinology, osteology, diabetology, acute and chronic metabolic disorders, obesity and other nutritional disorders (including Intensive Metabolic Care), non-invasive cardiology (including Coronary Unit care), angiology and hypertension (with special attention to endocrine-conditioned cardiovascular diseases), and provides both outpatient and inpatient care. The diagnostic complement includes ultrasound investigation focused on internal secretion glands

and angiology, echocardiography, including of the esophagus, long-term blood pressure monitoring and function load test investigation. The clinic has 114 beds, of this number 15 in intensive care; together with other centers of the General Teaching Hospital it provides comprehensive internal medical care to catchment-area patients.

The clinic is a principal scientific and training center of Charles University; it generates the most prolific publishing activity at the First Faculty of Medicine. The staff of the clinic includes the presidents and scientific secretaries of five national specialized associations (endocrinological, cardiological, obesitological, of hypertension and of atherosclerosis) and prof. Jan Škrha is an important official of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD).

The scope and depth of its activities make the Third Medical Department one of the most important centers in the field of endocrinology and metabolism in the Czech Republic with a clear potential for further growth and enhancement of the quality of the services it provides. We thank our friends, Czech and foreign centers and also individual physicians for their cooperation in the field of science, training and therapeutic care.

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