

The Legacy of Dr. Alexandru Eugen Nicolau: A Pioneer of Minimally Invasive Surgery in Romania

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It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Alexandru Eugen Nicolau, a beloved and esteemed member of our medical community. Dr. Nicolau's dedication to the field of minimally invasive surgery was unparalleled and his contributions to the advancement of this discipline in Romania were instrumental.



Alexandru Eugen Nicolau was born in Ramnicu-Sarat on October 28, 1953 in a family of doctors. His father was a general surgeon and his mother gynecologist; therefore, medicine was present in his life from an early age. Dr. Nicolau's medical career was marked by numerous accomplishments. He graduated from the "Iuliu Hatieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Cluj-Napoca in 1978, and subsequently completed his surgical internship between 1977 and 1980. He then served as a community physician in 1980-1981 before embarking on his journey as a general surgery resident from 1981 to 1984, emerging as a third-ranked candidate out of 540. He became a specialist doctor between 1984 and 1991 and was promoted to a primary degree physician in 1991. Dr. Nicolau's dedication to his craft led him to obtain his Ph.D. in 2001, with his thesis focusing on the use of laparoscopy in emergency surgery. Among his mentors in surgery he mentioned in chronological order H. Nicolau (his father), C. Mircioiu, A. Andercou, P. Martin, N.G. Ionescu, O. Pereni, D.

Setlacec, M. Soare, I. Vintila, G. Ionescu, M. Ciurel, J.F. Cuttat, B. Navez, B. Dallemagne.

Dr. Nicolau was one of the most active members of The Romanian Society of Surgery (RSS). He attended the Bucharest Chapter local meetings where he also presented some of his work in the Surgical Department of Bucharest Emergency Hospital. He has published important papers in the prestigious journal *Chirurgia*, the official journal of the Romanian Society of Surgery. He also has an interest in this field of emergency surgery and trauma, being a member of the ESTES from 2007 and a founding member of the Romanian Society for Emergency Surgery and Trauma affiliated with the European Society for Emergency Surgery and Trauma (ESTES). He was the co-director of the first international course in Romania with the topic "Laparoscopy in the acute abdomen" (Iasi, 2007).

Dr. Nicolau's interest in laparoscopic surgery began in the early 1990s, and he was among the first Romanians to be recognized as a member of the prestigious European Association for Endoscopic Surgery (EAES) in 1995. He was on the boards of RAES (Romanian Association of Endoscopic Surgery- RAES) and the abdominal trauma section of (European Association for Trauma and Emergency Surgery (ESTES)). His interest in laparoscopic surgery originated in the early 90s, being one of the first Romanians to receive the status of member of the prestigious European Associations for Endoscopic Surgery (EAES). He was a regular attendee at RAES and EAES events, where he generously shared his extensive experience and expertise, inspiring countless genera-

tions of surgeons. Dr. Nicolau was a surgeon who was passionately devoted to his chosen profession, colleague, and true friend of those who had the privilege of knowing him.

Dr. Nicolau's contributions to the field of minimally invasive surgery in Romania were groundbreaking. In December 1993, he performed the first laparoscopic surgery at the Bucharest Emergency Clinical Hospital, among the initial such procedures in the country. He further honed his skills through internships in prestigious medical centers in Belgium and Switzerland, solidifying his status as a pioneer in this field within Romania.

Dr. Nicolau's legacy extends beyond his impressive surgical accomplishments. He was a mentor dedicated to numerous generations of surgeons, sharing his knowledge and expertise with unwavering enthusiasm. For those who knew him as well as those who never had the opportunity to meet him, Dr. Alexandru Eugen Nicolau will forever be remembered as a surgeon who embodied the highest standards of professionalism and a tireless advocate for the advancement of minimally invasive surgery in Romania.

He was passionate about literature, travel, music since the 65-90s, and road cycling. In 2019, he became a vice-world champion in road cycling (four events) in Budva Montenegro, a world championship of all sports for medical personnel, and this year a world champion cycling, World Medi games Algarve Portugal, in the 65-69 age group.

For all his accomplishments and contributions, we mourn the loss of a truly remarkable individual, a trailblazer, and a cherished member of our medical community.