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## Ion Ababii - a life dedicated to medicine

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Ion Ababii, doctor habilitatus in medical sciences, university professor, academician of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASM), former head of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology and rector of the *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy from the Republic of Moldova (*Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh), former Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, Knight of the Order of the Republic, has reached the honorable age of 80.

Born on February 11, 1944, in the village of Ochiul-Alb, located in the Drochia district, Ion Ababii comes from a family of farmers deeply rooted in local traditions. His journey through life and career has been remarkable and noteworthy.

Education started in his native village with the 7-grade school, the general education secondary school in Baraboi commune and the State Institute of Medicine in Chisinau (SIMC), which he graduated with honors in 1966. The foundational education laid a solid groundwork for his remarkable ascent through the professional ranks, demonstrating a blend of clinical excellence and academic prowess. Beginning as an internist and otorhinolaryngologist specialist at the Straseni District Hospital from 1966 to 1969, he then pursued a doctorate at the Children's Clinic of the Institute of Scientific Research in Otorhinolaryngology in Moscow, Russian Federation. This rigorous academic pursuit culminated in the defense of his thesis and the award of a Doctor of Medical Sciences degree in 1973. Afterwards, Ion Ababii completed his post-doctorate at the same institution, defending his doctoral habilitation thesis in 1986. His academic and professional milestones continued with his appointment as the head of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology from 1988 to 2019, earning the title of university professor in 1989. He served as Vice-Chancellor for Clinical Medicine from



1989 to 1994, was named a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASM) in 1993, and assumed the prestigious post of rector at *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh from 1994 to 2019. His recognition within the academic community was further solidified by his induction as a full member of the ASM in 2000. Ion Ababii's contributions extended beyond academia into public service, where he held the position of Minister of Health and Social Protection from 2005 to 2008. Currently, he serves as a consultant professor at the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, continuing his lifelong dedication to clinical, scientific, pedagogical, and managerial excellence. This illustrious career is not merely a collection of titles and positions but a testament to Ion Ababii's profound

impact on the medical field and his unwavering commitment to improving health care and education.

At the beginning of his career, Ion Ababii seamlessly merged his clinical duties as a top-tier pediatric otorhinolaryngologist with his academic and research pursuits. He progressed through various educational roles, starting as an assistant in 1972, advancing to associate professor by 1985, and then assuming the role of head of the Otorhinolaryngology Department at the State Institute of Medicine in Chisinau (later known as *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh) from 1988. Since October 2019, he has been imparting his vast knowledge and experience as a consultant professor in the same department.

As a distinguished otorhinolaryngologist, Professor Ion Ababii spearheaded the introduction and implementation of innovative treatments for children suffering from acute stenotic and recurrent laryngotracheitis. His pioneering work led to the establishment of a new research direction within otorhinolaryngology focused on developing prognostic indices. These indices are crucial for assessing the

risk levels associated with the recurrence of ENT diseases and their progression to chronic conditions in children. The significance of these prognostic indicators cannot be overstated. They play a vital role in preventing the chronicity of ENT diseases, thereby enhancing the overall health and quality of life for children. Through his innovative research and dedication to clinical excellence, Professor Ion Ababii has significantly contributed to the field of pediatric otorhinolaryngology, laying the groundwork for future advancements in the treatment and prevention of ENT diseases in children.

Ion Ababii, a scientist of international renown, has made significant strides in the field of otorhinolaryngology, focusing his research on the diagnosis and treatment of complex diseases. His work spans a broad array of areas, including recurrent inflammatory diseases of the ear and upper respiratory tract in children, assessment of the auditory organ in premature and underweight infants, and the management of latent otitis and otoantritis in young children. His expertise also extends to auricular suppurations, the intersection of immunology and otorhinolaryngology, pediatric audiology, the application of laser therapy in ENT, and the utilization of functional endoscopic surgery for the nose and paranasal sinuses, as well as microsurgery for the ear and upper respiratory tract, and tackling chronic tonsillitis in children, among others.

Ion Ababii's contributions have not only been theoretical but also practical, especially in terms of advancing medical technology within the clinic. Under his guidance, the clinic was outfitted with the latest medical equipment and technologies, enabling the introduction of new diagnostic and therapeutic methodologies. These innovations include computerized audiometry, tympanometry, endoscopic functional surgery, endolaryngeal microsurgery, optical endoscopy, laser technology, and investigations into immune status, significantly broadening the scope and efficacy of treatments available to patients. Furthermore, at the behest of Professor Ion Ababii, the Laboratory of Pathology in ENT for premature children was established. This facility is dedicated to exploring various aspects of the pathogenesis, diagnosis, and treatment of inflammatory diseases affecting the nose, throat, and ear in young children. Through this initiative, Ion Ababii has provided a valuable resource for the advancement of pediatric otorhinolaryngology, underlining his commitment to improving health outcomes for children suffering from these conditions. His work epitomizes the blend of innovative research and practical application, setting a benchmark for excellence in the medical field.

He is the author of over 540 scientific works, including 450 scientific articles, 11 monographs, 10 manuals, over 30 methodical guidelines, and about 35 patents for inventions and innovations. He actively participated in numerous national and international scientific forums. Under the scientific leadership of Professor Ion Ababii, 16 doctoral and postdoctoral theses were defended in medical sciences – this accomplishment signifies the establishment of

a veritable scientific school under Ion Ababii's guidance, emphasizing his influence as a mentor and leader in his field.

Since 1994, university professor Ion Ababii holds the post of rector of the *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine in the Republic of Moldova.

At the initiative and under the leadership of rector Ion Ababii, the *Concept of university training, postgraduate residency and continuous medical education* was developed, the application of which allowed the creation of an effective training system for medical specialists and pharmacists for the Republic of Moldova and for other states at the high-level of that time, according to the standards of the World Federation for Medical Education.

Alma Mater's strategic development directions and objectives were reflected in the University's Development Strategy for the period 2011-2020, developed under the leadership of Rector Ion Ababii. Taking into consideration that we live in the age of digitization, when information technologies are implemented in all fields of activity, under the leadership of rector Ion Ababii, the university's computerization strategy was also developed in the period 2012-2015. The implementation of this strategy was completed with the creation of the University Management Information System (SIMU) – a functional and transparent software. These two documents were the basis of the essential transformations that took place at the university in all areas: human resources, education, research, clinical activity, management, international relations, and social activity.

Under the leadership of Rector Ion Ababii, human resources and the remuneration of teaching staff were prioritized areas, reflecting his commitment to creating a vibrant and conducive educational environment. Recognizing the importance of globalization in education, Ababii spearheaded initiatives to attract talented young professionals to the university's departments and other subdivisions. A key criterion for these new hires was proficiency in internationally recognized languages, particularly English, coupled with adeptness in information technology. This strategic focus not only enriched the university's talent pool but also aligned with the broader goal of enhancing its global standing.

During Ion's Ababii tenure as rector, efforts were made to provide both teaching and academic staff with opportunities to enhance their English language proficiency and computer literacy. These efforts were instrumental in fostering an inclusive and versatile academic environment, enabling the university to offer educational programs in four languages: Romanian, Russian, French, and English. Such linguistic diversity significantly contributed to the internationalization of the educational process, attracting foreign students and facilitating a multicultural learning experience.

In addition to his focus on innovation and inclusivity, Rector Ion Ababii also demonstrated a profound respect for the contributions of the university's senior members,

who brought invaluable academic, scientific, and clinical expertise. Recognizing the importance of preserving this wealth of knowledge, he initiated the establishment of the consultant professor position by governmental order. This role was designed to ensure a seamless generational exchange of knowledge and experience, thereby maintaining continuity in the university's academic excellence and institutional memory. Through these measures, Ion Ababii not only enhanced the educational landscape within the university but also set a precedent for nurturing both emerging talents and seasoned experts, ensuring the institution's ongoing development and relevance in the global academic community.

Guiding the university under Ion Ababii's stewardship was a commitment to the enhancement and structuring of the educational and didactic process. A particular focus was addressing the gaps in pre-university education encountered by first-year students in key foundational subjects. The response involved a concerted effort from the faculty within relevant departments to provide additional instruction, aiming to equip students with the foundational knowledge needed for their subsequent studies.

Drawing inspiration from the practices of European medical schools, Ion Ababii championed the early engagement of students in practical settings such as hospitals, polyclinics, dental offices, and pharmacies right from their first year. This initiative was designed to provide hands-on experience early in their academic journey, fostering a deeper understanding of their future professional roles.

In a strategic move towards enhancing the quality of education and facilitating student mobility, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System was adopted during the academic year 2001-2002. This was complemented by the development of educational standards across various profiles, specialties, specializations, and disciplines. Such measures laid the groundwork for inter-university partnerships, ensuring that students' coursework and achievements were recognized across institutions. These reforms not only aligned with international best practices but also positioned the university as a forward-thinking institution, committed to providing a comprehensive and globally compatible education.

The educational strategy at the university experienced significant enhancements under the guidance of rector Ion Ababii, with a shift towards incorporating modern educational technologies. This evolution included the adoption of interactive teaching methods, problem-based learning through clinical cases, the principles of evidence-based medicine, and the use of virtual programs. The institution also embraced distance learning and leveraged contemporary information technologies to enrich the educational experience.

Aiming to bolster the integrity and transparency of the evaluation process, the university introduced the Test-Corector system in the academic year 2002-2003. This development was followed by the implementation of a new assessment method in 2016, the computer-assisted eval-

uation in SIMU. These initiatives were complemented by the inauguration of the Academic Evaluation Center, which aimed to minimize subjective bias in the evaluation process by removing the human factor.

Starting in 1995, Ion Ababii initiated a transformative approach to postgraduate residency training, ranging from 2 to 5 years, designed to prepare medical specialists and pharmacists. This program marked a significant advancement in higher medical education, focusing on the comprehensive training of healthcare professionals.

Aligned with the Concept of training medical and pharmaceutical personnel in the Republic of Moldova, the university has established stringent quality and performance standards for professional practice. Since 2016, medical specialists and pharmacists are required to continuously update their professional competencies through the Faculty of Continuing Medical Training. This ongoing education process is coordinated by the Department of Continuing Medical Education (DEMC), ensuring that professionals remain at the forefront of their fields, equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to meet the evolving demands of healthcare.

The policy promoted by Rector Ion Ababii was aimed at fostering a symbiotic relationship between education, training, scientific research, and innovation, aligning with the global trends in science development. This vision was encapsulated in the Development Strategy of *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh for 2011-2020, which set forth critical objectives for the institution's research activities. These objectives included enhancing the management of scientific research, elevating the quality and competitiveness of the research output, effectively utilizing, promoting, and disseminating scientific findings, and nurturing the human potential within the scientific research domain.

Under Ion Ababii's leadership, *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh took pioneering steps to bolster the research infrastructure by initiating the formation of a consortium among Moldova's former medical doctoral organizing institutions. This effort culminated in the establishment of the Doctoral School in the field of Medical Sciences, a significant milestone in the country's academic landscape.

*Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh distinguished itself as the first institution in the country to introduce a procedure for assessing the quality of scientific research to ensure academic integrity. This included the ethical review of projects to align with international best practices in research. Efforts were made to expand research collaborations with specialists from clinics and universities around the world, enhancing the global reach and impact of the institution's scientific endeavors. A particular focus was placed on the dissemination of research findings through publications in international journals with an impact factor (IF), underscoring the institution's commitment to contributing to the global scientific community. This strategy not only bolstered the visibility and credibility of the research conducted under the auspices of *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh but also positioned the institution as a leader in medical

science education and research on the international stage.

In 2005, the University's commitment to innovation was recognized on an international level when it was awarded the World Intellectual Property Organization Trophy. This accolade highlighted the institution's contributions to intellectual property and innovation. Further demonstrating its dedication to research excellence and ethical standards, *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh became a signatory to the European Charter of Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in 2014. In a significant acknowledgment of its research capabilities, the University's scientific research activity was accredited by the National Accreditation and Attestation Council of the Republic of Moldova in 2016 for seven research profiles, earning the distinction "Organization with international recognition" (category A).

An integral part of the University's scientific community is the annual scientific conference for students, PhD students, and medical residents held during the University Days. This event plays a crucial role in fostering a vibrant scientific atmosphere. From their first year of study, students engage in research activities through the student scientific circles of various departments, underlining the University's commitment to early research involvement. A notable highlight under Ion Ababii's patronage was the inauguration of the International Congress of Students and Young Doctors - *MedEspera*, in May 2006. This event, which marked its 10th edition this year, stands as a testament to the ongoing efforts to integrate students and young professionals into the global scientific community.

The training of medical specialists and pharmacists at the university has always emphasized the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The quality and effectiveness of clinical training have been significantly enhanced by collaborative efforts among professors, lecturers, university assistants, resident doctors, and the skilled personnel of hospital departments.

Throughout his tenure, Rector Ion Ababii initiated several measures aimed at improving the conditions for clinical training and continuous professional development of students, resident doctors, medical specialists, and pharmacists. These efforts ensured that the university not only maintained high standards of education and training but also fostered an environment conducive to practical learning and professional growth.

The University Clinic of Primary Nursing, inaugurated in 2003 through Rector Ion Ababii's direct involvement, holds a pivotal role in the clinical activities of *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh. This significant development came as a result of the partnership within the American International Health Alliance between the Eastern Virginia School of Medicine in Norfolk/Portsmouth, USA, and *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh. Coinciding with this, the Center for Training and Testing Practical Skills on Standardized Patients was launched, which evolved into the University Center for Simulation in Medical Training (CUSIM). This center offers students, medical residents, and trainee doc-

tors the chance to engage with high-fidelity simulators, enhancing their practical abilities and patient communication skills. The diverse and educationally rich training methods employed within CUSIM are particularly notable for their effectiveness.

For many years, the clinical training for the Faculty of Stomatology was primarily conducted at the University Dental Clinic. The establishment of the University Dental Service in 2011, later renamed the University Dental Center in 2015, marked a significant improvement in training facilities. This upgrade greatly enhanced access to treatment rooms for students and medical residents, fostering optimal conditions for the development of practical skills in line with contemporary demands. Additionally, it expanded the capacity for providing dental treatments to patients within the community. The university administration has undertaken considerable efforts to augment and reinforce the technical and material foundation of the Center.

Furthermore, the *Vasile Procopișin* University Pharmaceutical Center and the Bardar Scientific Center for the Cultivation of Medicinal Plants are instrumental in the practical training of students and the academic staff of the Faculty of Pharmacy. These facilities provide essential resources for hands-on learning and application of pharmaceutical sciences, ensuring that students and staff are well-equipped with the necessary practical skills for their professional development.

In 2018, significant strides were made to update the main normative acts that govern clinical activity, with a particular focus on enhancing the legal and operational framework of clinical practices associated with the *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh. This initiative led to the revision of the Government Decision №. 42 of January 12, 2006, which pertains to the clinics of the *Nicolae Testemițanu* State University of Medicine and Pharmacy. Additionally, the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Social Protection issued an order regarding the clinical bases and university clinics of the *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh departments, further solidifying the structure and governance of clinical activities within the university.

Rector Ion Ababii placed a strong emphasis on international collaboration, which over the years has been directed towards fostering cooperative relations, identifying funding and opportunities for research, mobility, and institutional development projects, and offering services to international citizens in integrated medical, residency, postgraduate, and research studies. One of the earliest collaborative efforts involved establishing relationships with all the universities of medicine and pharmacy in Romania, facilitating academic mobility, participation in scientific events and training, as well as engaging in scientific research and joint projects.

The establishment of the university agency of Francophonie at the Faculty of Medicine in 1998 laid the groundwork for productive collaboration with Francophone higher education institutions from France, Canada, Bulgaria,

and Romania. These partnerships continue to thrive, with academic and research mobilities with universities in France and Belgium now considered a tradition.

The cooperation with the United States of America has been fruitful and enduring. For over 25 years, a collaborative relationship has existed between the *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh and medical education institutions in the state of North Carolina, USA, as part of a cooperation plan approved by the Republic of Moldova - North Carolina Bilateral Committee. This partnership has yielded remarkable outcomes in various domains, including virtual training, pharmacy, dentistry, and primary health care. Notably, the collaboration extended to the Medical Scientific Library of *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh and 12 medical libraries in North Carolina, which provided the university library with access to extensive medical databases, including thousands of monographs, manuals, and scientific journals. Moreover, American doctors have contributed to dental care for children in orphanages, showcasing the tangible benefits of these international collaborations on healthcare and education.

Under the leadership of Rector Ion Ababii, the University forged significant collaborative relationships with German medical institutions, supported by the German Federal Ministry of Health. Notable partnerships were established with the Medical University of Lübeck through the “Reach-for-Moldova” project and the Borstel Scientific Center. These collaborations aimed to enhance practical training opportunities for students and provide research scholarships, fostering a robust exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Furthermore, a productive partnership was initiated with the University of Leipzig, focusing on modernizing the university curriculum and introducing innovative training methods, including simulation. This cooperation extended to fields such as otorhinolaryngology, hearing pathologies, medical assistance for patients with rheumatological diseases, and knowledge exchange in rehabilitation, enriching the academic and clinical experiences of both institutions’ communities.

The University also established and continuously developed fruitful relations with the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences in Kaunas, focusing on advancing capacities in endoscopic cardiology among other critical medical fields. Thanks to its high-performing University Hospital, the Lithuanian institution welcomed young specialists from Moldova for training in various medical disciplines. This initiative aimed at adopting new methods and approaches in Moldova, aligning with contemporary European medical practices, thereby enhancing the quality of healthcare provision and medical education in the region.

The collaboration with the Medical University of Poznan, Poland, stands as a testament to the university’s commitment to fostering international partnerships. This relationship is characterized by mutual academic mobility involving clinicians, final-year pharmacy students during their summer internships, and faculty members, particu-

larly in the realm of applying simulation methods in medical training.

Moreover, the university has seen fruitful cooperation with medical and academic institutions from the European Union, Russia, Kazakhstan, and notably with medical universities in Ukraine, including Chernivtsi, Odesa, Vinnytsia, and Ternopil. These partnerships have facilitated a productive exchange of knowledge and expertise, significantly enriching the educational and research environment.

The university has benefited from projects financed by governments of countries with advanced economies, including Norway’s support for optometry training and oral pathology research and Estonia’s funding for sports medicine development. Additionally, Switzerland contributed to strengthening education and doctoral studies in bioethics. These initiatives reflect a broad international support base aiming to enhance the University’s educational and research capacities.

Projects financed by European funds such as ERASMUS MUNDUS, ERASMUS+, and TEMPUS have played a crucial role in modernizing higher medical education, enhancing quality assurance, reforming university management, and updating services. These collaborations have been instrumental in aligning the university’s practices with international standards.

Rector Ion Ababii’s tenure was marked by a keen focus on improving the technical material and informational support for the University’s educational and scientific activities. Initiatives under his guidance from 1994 to 2019 include the establishment of the University Center for Medical Rehabilitation, the Scientific Center for the Cultivation of Medicinal Plants, the University Sports Complex, the University Sociocultural Complex, the Alley of Scholars and Illustrious Doctors, and the Driving School, among others. These efforts have significantly enhanced the University’s infrastructure and resources.

Ion Ababii also prioritized creating conducive working and study conditions for the university community. This included ensuring comfortable living conditions in the student dormitories, which were regularly renovated and equipped with necessary amenities.

In 2010, the *Nicolae Testemițanu* Residential Complex’s construction began, a project initiated by Ion Ababii through a public-private partnership. Completed in 2013, this complex provides accommodation for university employees and specialists from other public medical and health institutions, further demonstrating Ion Ababii’s commitment to the well-being of the academic and medical community.

Under Rector Ion Ababii’s leadership, *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh underwent significant developments, achieving National Council for Accreditation and Attestation accreditation in 2001 and 2007. These milestones reflect the University’s enduring dedication to excellence in medical education and research.

Since July 2009, *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh has been at the forefront of institutional quality assurance, implementing the Quality Management System in alignment

with the ISO 9001:2008 international standard. This initiative underscores the University's commitment to maintaining high standards of education, research, and administration. In a significant step forward, September 2016 saw the university being certified according to the updated requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 standard, marking it as the first higher education institution to achieve this distinction. This certification, which is annually confirmed, attests to the university's continuous efforts to enhance its quality management processes, ensuring that its operations meet the highest international standards.

Since 2011, *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh has progressively joined prominent international associations, marking its commitment to global engagement and excellence in medical education. The university's memberships include the Association of Medical Schools in Europe from 2011, the Association of International Universities since 2012, and the Association for Medical Education in Europe starting in 2013. These affiliations underscore the institution's dedication to aligning with the highest standards of medical education and research worldwide.

The university's practices and achievements have been recognized on multiple occasions. Notably, during 2013-2014, an evaluation by representatives from the Association of Medical Schools in Europe and the World Federation for Medical Education hailed *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh as a beacon of good practices in the region, including countries from the former Soviet Union and the Black Sea basin. This commendation highlights the university's role as a model institution in medical education and research.

In recognition of its contributions to the field and on the occasion of its 70th anniversary in 2015, the university was awarded the highest state honor, the Order of the Republic. This prestigious award reflects the university's significant impact on medical education, healthcare, and society in the Republic of Moldova.

The year 2017 saw the approval of a new nomenclature of specialties, leading to the introduction of two undergraduate study programs: Optometry and General Medical Assistance. These programs, designed to run over four years with the accumulation of 240 ECTS credits, signify the University's ongoing efforts to diversify and modernize its educational offerings.

In 2018, the Faculty of Dentistry's Integrated Higher Education Program received accreditation from the Dental Council of California, USA, for five years, with the International Dental Professional Education Program accredited for two years. Furthermore, the institutional accreditation of study programs in Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy by ANACEC for a five-year period highlights the University's adherence to national standards.

The spring of 2019 marked another significant milestone when the university achieved international accreditation for a five-year term from an external commission of experts from Romania, Russia, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan of the Independent Accreditation and Rating Agency (IAAR), according to World Federation for Medical Edu-

cation standards. This accreditation is a testament to the university's commitment to excellence and its standing in the global medical education community.

During the period from 2005 to 2008, Professor Ion Ababii held the esteemed position of Minister of Health of the Republic of Moldova, making significant contributions to the development and fortification of the national health system as well as advancements in medical education. While we cannot comprehensively list all of the achievements of the university under the guidance of Rector Ion Ababii within these pages, they undoubtedly form a substantial part of the university's legacy.

In addition to his roles in teaching, scientific research, medical practice, and management, Professor Ion Ababii undertook remarkable responsibilities, serving as:

- President of the Scientific and Practical Association of Otorhinolaryngologists in Moldova; Vice-President of the Commission addressing issues in science and sustainable societal development under the President of the Republic of Moldova; Member of the Higher Attestation Commission of the Republic of Moldova; Member of the College and the Presidium of the Council of Experts of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova; Member of the specialized Scientific Council for defending doctoral theses.
- President of the *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh Senate; Head of the specialists from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova; Editor-in-chief of the annual magazine "Anale științifice ale USMF „Nicolae Testemițanu”, and member of the editorial boards of several other esteemed publications, including "Curierul medical" "Arta Medica", "Buletinul Academiei de Științe a Moldovei. Științe medicale", "Sănătate Publică, Economie și Management în Medicină", "Cercetări experimentale medico-chirurgicale".

Professor Ion Ababii's international recognition for his exceptional merits is evident from his roles as: Honorary Member of the Academies of Sciences in Poland and Finland; Honorary Member of the American Biographical Institute; Member of the US Academy of ENT; Coordinator from the Republic of Moldova for the USAID Partnership Program in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, and Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, implemented by AIHA; Member of the Executive Committee at WHO; Member of the editorial boards of various international journals, including: "Folia otorinolaringologica", "ORL.ro", "Cercetări experimentale medico-chirurgicale" (Romania), "Журнал Вушних, Носових і Горлових Хвороби", "Журнал Гродненского Государственного Медицинского Университета" (Ukraine).

The prodigious multilateral activities, high professionalism, and contributions of Professor Ion Ababii to the organization and restructuring of higher medical education and the national health system have been widely appreciated both in the country and abroad. For his exceptional merits in scientific, didactic, and public activities, he has

been honored with several prestigious awards and decorations, including the “Friendship of Peoples” Order (1981), the “Order of the Republic” (2004), and the “Bogdan Înțemeietorul” Order (2019). He was also awarded the title of Emeritus of the Republic of Moldova (1995) and has received numerous medals and honors such as the Gold Medal (1997), the Great Albert Schweitzer Gold Medal (2001), the P. Erlich Gold Medal (2002), the “Robert Koch” Medal (2004), the “The Name in Science” Medal from Oxford (2010), the Gold Medal of the International Society “Health of Society” in Kyiv, Ukraine (2016), the Socrates International Distinction in Oxford, UK (2006), a Certificate of Appreciation from the California State Senate (2018), and a Diploma for outstanding performance and contributions to the medical system (2018).

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to medicine, he has been bestowed with the honorary title of Doctor Honoris Causa by various esteemed institutions such as UMF *Carol Davila* in Bucharest, Romania (2006), the International University of Vienna (2007), the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Târgu Mureș, Romania (2007), the University of Medicine in Craiova, Romania (2008), and the *Victor Babeș* University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Timișoara, Romania (2014). Additionally, he has received numerous awards, diplomas of honor and excellence, certificates of appreciation, and medals at international research, innovation, and invention events.

Throughout his various roles and positions, Professor Ion Ababii has consistently demonstrated maximum re-

sponsibility, foresight, professional competence, discipline, principledness, exactingness, collegiality, humanity, and respect. As a scientist, educator, and manager, he has significantly impacted Moldovan education, leaving a lasting legacy on generations of students, medical residents, trainee doctors, and Alma Mater graduates. His commitment to nurturing studious youth through the promotion of work ethic, love for knowledge, respect for humanity, and the pursuit of honor, dignity, and justice has been exemplary.

Professor Ion Ababii’s career has been characterized by intelligence, effort, devotion to his cause, civic courage, non-conformism, and steadfastness in his convictions. He is a true patriot, deeply rooted in his love for his country’s culture, language, and history, which he continuously instills in younger generations. Even in his venerable age, Professor Ion Ababii remains a model of correctness, honesty, and discipline in all his endeavors.

We sincerely hope that current and future generations will have the privilege of encountering such exemplary figures in their professional and spiritual journeys and recognizing and appreciating the complexities of personalities like Professor Ion Ababii. On the occasion of his special anniversary, we extend our warmest congratulations to Dear Professor, Academician Ion Ababii, on behalf of the university community. We wish him good health, energy, and strength to continue his noble work, and we express our heartfelt gratitude for his dedicated and sacrificial contributions to the development of *Nicolae Testemițanu* SUMPh and the national health system.

**Happy Birthday, Distinguished Professor,  
Rector Ion Ababii!**