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## HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND ANNIVERSARIES

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### **VIKTOR S. RUKAVISHNIKOV** **(August 6, 1949 – October 23, 2025)**



On October 23, 2025, Viktor S. Rukavishnikov, Scientific Director of the East-Siberian Institute of Medical and Ecological Research, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (since 2004), and a distinguished scientist in the fields of hygiene, occupational health, and human ecology, passed away.

Viktor S. Rukavishnikov dedicated over 50 years of his life to science. He linked his entire career with the Institute, progressing through every stage of professional advancement. In 1992, he became its director and led the institution for a quarter of a century. For a number of years, he served as the Deputy Chairman of the East-Siberian Scientific Center (ESSC) of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and effectively acted as its chairman from 2001 to 2011. He made a significant contribution to the establishment and development of the ESSC and its divisions. He also served as an Assistant to a Deputy of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and was a member of the State Duma's Ecology Council.

Under Dr. Rukavishnikov's leadership, a comprehensive series of scientific studies was successfully carried out across the Irkutsk region. These studies formed the basis for developing public health preservation and improvement strategies. His broad erudition and creative potential ensured the successful implementation of interdisciplinary projects dedicated to exploring the Asian North and the Baikal region. He made an invaluable contribution to substantiating new forms of occupational diseases resulting from chronic exposure to cyanide compounds in workers at gold extraction plants, and to developing a classification for previously unstudied visual impairments caused by chronic mercury intoxication. Dr. Rukavishnikov developed the theory of «sensory conflict» in the pathogenesis of diseases caused by physical factors in the working environment. Thanks to his efforts, Russia saw the first development and approval of a classification and criteria for identifying environmentally determined health disorders, a framework that continues to underpin research into environmentally related diseases.

His name is associated with pioneering research into the acute and long-term consequences of exposure to complex toxic substances in firefighters, the development of a conceptual model for the formation of toxic encephalopathies, and the substantiation and implementation of new methodological foundations for the safety of nanocomposites.

At his initiative and with his active participation, collaborative research was conducted with scientific institutions in the United States, Belarus, Armenia, and Mongolia. Key findings from his work in occupational health have been translated into the Mongolian language.

Viktor S. Rukavishnikov devoted considerable attention to training the next generation of scientists. Under his supervision, 13 Candidate of Sciences (PhD) and 9 Doctor of Sciences (DSc) dissertations were completed. He was the author of over 20 inventions, 400 scientific publications, and 14 monographs. He was also a co-author of the national guidelines: Occupational Respiratory Diseases (2015); Occupational Pathology (2014, 2024); and the monograph Ophthalmomercurialism (2016).

Dr. Rukavishnikov was a member of the Presidium of the Irkutsk Branch of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SB RAS), a member of the SB RAS Scientific Council for Lake Baikal Issues, Vice President

of the All-Russian Association of Occupational Health Physicians and Specialists, a member of the Occupational Pathology Commission of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, and Chairman of Dissertation Councils specializing in hygiene and occupational health. For many years, he served on the editorial boards of the journals Occupational Medicine and Industrial Ecology, Siberian Scientific Medical Journal, and Medicine in Kuzbass.

His work in organizing collaborative research between his institute and other SB RAS institutions was recognized with the V.A. Koptug Commemorative Jubilee Medal from the SB RAS. His international collaborative efforts were acknowledged with the Golden Badge of Mongolia, the "Badge of Best Employee of Social Security and Labour Sector".

Dr. Rukavishnikov was the first laureate in Russia to receive the award named after Academician N.F. Izmerov in the category "For Personal Contribution to the Development of Occupational Medicine in Russia". He was a five-time laureate of the regional competition in science and technology, was awarded the "For Services to the Irkutsk Region" Distinguished Service Badge, received a Certificate of Honor from the Governor of the Irkutsk Region, and was awarded the Commemorative Medal "For Services to the City of Angarsk". By decision of the City Duma, he was named an Honorary Citizen of Angarsk. He held the title of Honorary Professor at the Academician N.F. Izmerov Research Institute of Occupational Health, the All-Russian Research Institute of Railway Hygiene of Rospotrebnadzor, and the Irkutsk Scientific Center of Surgery and Traumatology.

Dr. Rukavishnikov's professional achievements were recognized with numerous state and public awards: the Order of Friendship; medals of the Order "For Merit to the Fatherland", I and II degree; the "For Labor Valor" medal; the "350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Buryatia's Incorporation into Russia" medal; the "Honorary Health Worker" badge; the Honorary Badge of the Republic of Buryatia; a medal from the International Charitable Foundation "Patrons of the Century"; and badges commemorating the "75 Years of Irkutsk Region" and "80 Years of Irkutsk Region". He held the honorary titles "Honored Veteran of the SB RAS", "Honored Scientist of the SB RAS", and was awarded the "Golden Sigma" badge and the title "Honored Worker of Science and High Technologies of the Russian Federation".

All who worked with Viktor Stepanovich will remember him as a talented organizer, leader, mentor, and scientist of immense erudition. He was a demanding yet deeply committed individual who contributed immensely to the development of the Institute and the ESSC SB RAS. He never stood still; he constantly moved forward, confirming, challenging, and proposing his own vision for solving problems, always astonishing those around him with his inexhaustible energy, tirelessness, and optimism.

*The members of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the staff of the East-Siberian Institute of Medical and Ecological Research mourn the passing of Viktor S. Rukavishnikov and extend their sincere condolences to his family and friends.*

*The bright memory of Viktor S. Rukavishnikov will forever remain in the hearts of his colleagues and students.*