

Manuela Gozariu Le Bars (1962-2022)



In the fall of last year, prematurely and sadly, a prominent alumna of the Iuliu Hatieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy from Cluj-Napoca passed away: Manuela Gozariu Le Bars. Manuela was born in Cluj-Napoca, Romania on 21 April 1962. As a child, she began the school in the same city where she also started to play the piano for a few years, before deciding to become a medical doctor following the steps of her father, Liviu Gozariu, an outstanding endocrinologist. She graduated from the medical school of the Iuliu Hatieganu University in 1987 as head of her class. After a few rotas during the internship, she chose to follow a career in clinical pharmacology. She was admitted as assistant professor in the department of pharmacology of the Faculty of Medicine of Cluj-Napoca. After the fall of the iron curtain, by the end of 1989, Manuela had the possibility to benefit from research grants to pursue her research abroad and she worked in England, France, and the Netherlands. In 1994, she moved to France where she successfully achieved a second PhD degree in the Sorbonne University, focused on the mechanisms of pain. Attracted by the work in the pharmaceutical industry, she

continued to work on pain aspects in rheumatology in UPSA, where she highly contributed to the design and completion of clinical studies that have permitted to position paracetamol, as one of the most important painkiller for the management of osteoarthritis (OA). When UPSA was incorporated into Bristol Myers Squibb, she pursued the work on pain and osteoarthritis supporting the first international ultrasound study, performed under the umbrella of EULAR, the European Alliance for Rheumatology, on the use of ultrasound in knee OA. Further on, when she was promoted Global Director Worldwide for Immunology, she prominently contributed to the launching and spread of the use of Abatacept in the therapy of rheumatoid arthritis (RA). She also had major contributions in funding research in rheumatological inflammatory diseases at EU level (IMI) and participated herself in the elaboration and development of innovative trials' protocols, such as the use of ultrasound and MRI for monitoring Abatacept treatment in RA and for evaluating the role of an early treatment to prevent the disease. Many of her ideas were crystallized in several highly cited medical papers. In the last years, she became Medical Director of Immunology Gastroenterology for Europe, Middle East, and Africa for Janssen a Johnson & Johnson company. Here also, her work was prominent in promoting studies in inflammatory bowel diseases (IBDs), including the use of bowel ultrasonography for the monitoring of IBDs. She also promoted many scientific and educational programs in the field. Fighting in her last five years with great courage and discretion against a severe disease, she was still able to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of many patients with inflammatory bowel diseases. She continued to participate to the scientific progress in the gastroenterological field, co-authoring many manuscripts in top journals. Some of them were released even posthumously.

Manuela was one of the few Romanians who reached top positions in the pharmaceutical industry. She was an exemplary academic "product" of her university. Unfortunately, she passed away too early, at only 60 years. She will be remembered by her collaborators and friends worldwide and by her Romanian colleagues. In her memory, the Iuliu Hatieganu University of Medicine of Pharmacy decided to offer yearly an award named after her to the first author of this University with the most highly cited paper in the precedent three years.

We thank you Manuela, and we will miss you, but your work, intelligence and enthusiasm will be always with us.

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