Interview with Dr. Ionut Luchian
In this section of our magazine we tell stories of our alumni in hopes of inspiring young generations to pursue their dreams and aspire to always aim higher. For this interview we bring to you Dr. Ionut Luchian. He is a lecturer and Assistant Professor in Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Faculty of Dental Medicine, Department of Periodontology. He was International Scientific Officer of IADS 2009-2010. He was Chairman IADS 2010-2011. He was also an Immediate Past President IADS 2011-2012.

1. Firstly we’d like to know a little about you. Who is Dr. Luchian? How did you decide to study dentistry?

First of all, allow me to thank you for your kind invitation. It’s always a pleasure to hear from IADS. I never found it easy to talk about myself because I don’t know where to start from or what to emphasize. I am a regular person who tries, all the time, to do things properly in his professional life. I have wanted since I was a kid to study medicine. I think that practicing in the medical field is more like a mission than a profession. You have to possess certain qualities like determination, motivation, ambition, strength and in the same time it’s mandatory to build your career on humanity. In my case dentistry was just an option based on my first choice, medical field.

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2. You are a specialist in Periodontology. For all our readers that are making their post grad career choices, could you tell us why you picked periodontology? Looking back now, would you pick it again?

Well, this is a very good question. I like to say that periodontology picked me instead of me choosing periodontology. Some people say that periodontology is less appealing when we compare it to other dental specialties. I always say that periodontology is the most 'medical' out of the dental specialties and I see it as combination of internal medicine with plastic surgery. Periodontology is the best choice for people who like challenges and integrating the general status of the patient in their daily dental practice. In the same time periodontology is the perfect option for individuals fond of research.

Looking back, I would pick periodontology earlier, instead of waiting for it to pick me.

2. You are a specialist in Periodontology. For all our readers that are making their post grad career choices, could you tell us why you picked periodontology? Looking back now, would you pick it again?

IADS was one of the best periods of my life because I learnt a lot and I made friends for life. My first IADS meeting was the MYM in Ljubljana- Slovenia in 2008. It was a great experience and I was impressed by everything. I went back home and I said to my colleagues that we have to bring IADS to Romania.
In 2009 we hosted in Iasi the 56th IADS&YDW Annual World Dental Congress where I was the Chairman. I still remember the hard work that we did for organizing such an event and I am proud of my colleagues from the LOC for the passion and devotion they invested. I would like to express my special gratitude here for my lifetime friends Alexandra Wattad, Ciprian Meriuta, Ioana Meriuta, Cosmin Popa, who were part of that team. After the congress I became, for a short period of time, International Scientific Officer for filling up the vacant position until the elections. In 2010 I was elected IADS President in Brno in a sensitive moment for the association. The responsibility and the pressure were huge. I tried, during my term, to bring back the equilibrium in the organization and assure a smooth transition from one period to another. I was lucky to work with an incredible Executive Committee and I am proud of all them. I would like to take a minute to thank the members of the ExCo 2010-2011: Dr. Stefania Rado (General Secretary), Dr. Babak Sayahpour (Treasurer), Dr. Kajika Florykova (Czech Republic), Dr. Lena Malaty (Egypt), Dr. Pavel Scarlat (ISO), Dr. Tomaz Spindler (IPP).

5. Could you say being a member of IADS has positively affected your career?

Definitely YES. IADS was both part of my professional and personal life. My career wouldn’t have looked the same without IADS, because the association taught me that sky is the limit when you work hard to reach your goal.

The moment when you realize that a patient’s appreciation is more important than the pay check itself.

6. There is a general idea among young undergraduates, if not also the community that a periodontist only deals with plaque and tartar on teeth, though we all know it doesn’t include just that. Could you tell us of a moment or a specific case that made you realize there’s a lot more to it?

Periodontology might be neither the most spectacular nor the most profitable dental specialty but for sure it is the most biological one. A periodontist definitely deals with much more than plaque and calculus. In the last decades alone there were established many links between general diseases and periodontal status. Nowadays we are focusing extensively on the influence of periodontal disease on controlling systemic diseases. The case that will stay in my heart forever is a young patient with diabetes and kidney transplant. The patient was referred to our clinic due to a gingival overgrowth and she was desperate. Not only that the surgery went well but we manage to save the remaining teeth and also provide a splinting for the patient. Since then, I always receive a Christmas card from her. This is the moment when you realize that a patient’s appreciation is more important than the pay check itself.

7. You are in your mid 30s and you are a specialist in periodontology and a lecturer, it must have been tough, what keeps you going?

I am happy to see that IADS is in a continuous evolution. Although many years passed since I retired from IADS, I am extremely happy to notice the multitude of projects and the impressive work of the association.
I can’t say that it was easy and still it is not easy. You should never sleep on your achievements and start going further immediately. I really love teaching and researching and maybe the thought that one day I could make a difference in a student life keeps me going. There were many sacrifices on the way but I have never regretted anything. Performance requires sacrifice. In the end, it’s all about what you have left woven in the lives of the others.

8. What do you do during your leisure time, well apart from studying?

I am an absolutely normal person. I love cars, I like traveling, I am fond of classical music and visual arts. I never miss my gym training no matter what.

9. Is there anything else you would like to add on?

I rarely accept interviews due the lack of time. But I really enjoyed this one because I think that it might send a positive message to the newer generations.

10. Is there any advice you would like to give to our readers, especially the ones considering periodontology?

My piece of advice for your reader is to choose a specialty with their heart and not because of the profitability of a certain field. Doing what you like will make you feel like you are never going to work. I would feel extremely happy if after reading this interview, at least one student was convinced to choose periodontology for his or her advanced training.

We would like to thank Dr. Luchian for this interview. It was as informative as it was inspiring, and it hit home with the story of the young patient and the advice. We hope to see your light always shine brighter and brighter Dr. Luchian and also hope our new generation follows in your footsteps.

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