



PROF. HAKAN HULUSI CANER, M.D.

PROF. DR. HAKAN HULUSİ CANER

Erkin SÖNMEZ¹,
Mehmet Nur ALTINÖRS²

¹Assist. Dr., Başkent University,
Medical School, Neurosurgery
Department, Ankara,

²Prof. Dr, Başkent University,
Medical School, the Head of
Neurosurgery Department,
Ankara.

Address: Erkin SÖNMEZ,
Başkent Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi,
Beyin ve Sinir Cerrahisi ABD,
Ankara.

Tel.: 0312 2126868

E-mail: erkinso@gmail.com

Received: 25th December, 2013

Accepted: 29th December, 2013

SUMMARY

Professor Caner was born in Ankara on March 15, 1959. He began work as a research assistant in the Neurosurgery Department of Hacettepe University School of Medicine on 1984. During 1988 and 1989, he worked as a clinical and research fellow in the Department of Neurosurgery at Fukui University School of Medicine, in Japan. Furthermore, he spent four weeks observing stereotaxic brain surgery in the universities of Gunma and Keio in 1989. He returned to Hacettepe University, Turkey in 1989. He earned his specialist degree in 1992. He was awarded several national and international prizes due to his successful academic research. Baskent University awarded Dr. Caner the title of Professor in 2002. He began to work as the editor in chief for the official journals of the Turkish Neurosurgical Society in 2007. He was elected to the executive committee of the Turkish Spine Society on May 11, 2013. He was the leading spinal surgeon performing balloon kyphoplasty in Turkey. Furthermore, he commonly performed percutaneous spinal instrumentation, especially in combination with minimally invasive transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion (Mis-TLIF). He was one of the most experienced spinal surgeons dealing with atlantoaxial fusion surgery. He became one of the pioneers of Turkish spine surgery. He died due to gastric cancer in his most active period, leaving his lovely family and colleagues in deep sadness.

Keywords: Hakan Caner, kyphoplasty, percutaneous dynamic instrumentation, atlantoaxial surgery, Turkish Spine Association

Level of evidence: Biography, Level V

ÖZET

Prof. Dr. Hakan Caner, 15 Mart 1959'da Ankara'da doğmuştur. 1984 yılında Hacettepe Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Nöroşirürji ABD'de araştırma görevlisi olarak çalışmaya başlamıştır. 1988- 1989 yılları arasında, Japonya'da Fukui Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Nöroşirürji ABD'de araştırma ve klinik fellow olarak çalışmalarını sürdürmüştür. 1989 yılında 4 hafta süreyle Gunma Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi ve Keio Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesinde stereotaksik cerrahi konusunda gözlemlerde bulunmuştur. 1989 yılında Hacettepe Üniversitesi'ne geri dönen Dr. Caner, 1992 yılında girdiği uzmanlık sınavını başarıyla geçerek nöroşirürji uzmanı olmaya hak kazanmıştır. Başarılı akademik çalışmalar nedeniyle yurtiçi ve yurtdışı birçok ödülleri kazanmıştır. 2002 yılında Başkent Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Nöroşirürji ABD'de profesörlük kadrosuna atanmıştır. 2007 yılında TND yayın organları olan Turkish Neurosurgery ve Türk Nöroşirürji Dergisi editörlüğü görevini üstlenmiştir. 11 Mayıs 2013 tarihinde TOD yönetim kuruluna seçilmiştir. Türkiye'de balon kifoplastiyi ilk kullanan cerrahlardandır. Kifoplastiyi takiben perkütan enstrümantasyon konusunda yoğunlaşmıştır. Perkütan enstrümantasyon tekniğini minimal invazif transforaminal lomber cisimler arası füzyon (Mis-TLIF) tekniği ile birleştirip günlük pratiğinde sıkça kullanmıştır. Atlantoaksial füzyon konusunda da ülkemizdeki sayılı cerrahlardandır. Tüm bu alanda Türk Omurga Cerrahisi'nin gerçek bir öncüsü olmuştur. En verimli çağında kansere yenik düşerek aramızdan ayrılmış, omurga cerrahisine gönül veren tüm meslektaşlarını ve ailesini derin bir üzüntü içinde bırakmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hakan Caner, Kifoplasti, perkütan dinamik enstrümantasyon, Atlantoaksial cerrahi, Türk Omurga Derneği

Kanıt Düzeyi: Biyografi, Düzey V

INTRODUCTION:

Unfortunately, we received news of many losses in 2013. Prof. Hakan Caner, who was a member of the Turkish Spine Society Board and an instructor in the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School of Başkent University, died due to gastric cancer on 18 December 2013. This loss was a deep shock (Figure-1).



Figure-1. Prof. Dr. Hakan Caner.

He was hardworking and a real scientist. He had many articles published in international indexes. He was one of the first surgeons to perform balloon kyphoplasty and percutaneous dynamic systems in Turkey, and he made an effort to spread knowledge of these techniques nationwide. He was a true instructor and shared all of his knowledge with his students, assistants and colleagues. He worked to train students nationally and internationally (Figure-2).

In addition to his award-winning science, Prof. Dr. Caner was a very humble and loving person. He

was a good husband and father. His approach was always about reconciliation and peace. In situations of professional conflict, he always stayed neutral and played a unifying role. After he was selected as a member of the Turkish Spine Society, he participated in all educational situations as a trainer despite his illness, and made a significant effort on behalf of friendship and brotherhood.

For his contributions to Turkish Spine Surgery, we remember him with gratitude and mercy, and we wish patience to his grieving family.



Figure-2. Prof. Dr. Hakan Caner in a student study group meeting, Medical School of Başkent University.

BIOGRAPHY:

Prof. Dr. Hakan Caner was born on 15 March 1959 in Ankara. He was the youngest child in a family of two children. His mother was a philosophy teacher and his father was a military officer. He was a very bright student and he graduated ranked first in his class from Ankara Atatürk High School in 1976. In the same year, he was entitled to enter the Medical School of Hacettepe University, being ranked 34th among all students in Turkey.

He was an enthusiast and a successful student during his medical school education, and he became entitled to a university scholarship from TUBITAK from 1976–1982. In 1981, while he was the fifth

most successful student in his class, he worked as an observer in the Neurosurgery Department of Germany Ulm University's Medical School for two months.

In 1982, Dr. Caner graduated from medical school and completed his compulsory service in Gümüşhane Health Center between 1982 and 1983. On 10 January 1983, he married Dr. Biray Caner. They had two sons, Doruk and Işık Kaan (Figure-3).



Figure-3. In the graduation of his elder son Doruk with his wife and the other son Kaan.

In 1984, he began work as a research assistant in the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at Hacettepe University. He continued his work as a researcher and fellow in the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at Fukui University in Japan between 1988 and 1989.

In 1989, he observed stereotaxic surgery for four weeks in the medical schools of Gunma University and Keio University. In 1989, he returned to Hacettepe University and became entitled to be a neurosurgery specialist by passing the specialty exam in 1992.

During his work as a research assistant, he won many national and international awards due to his

successful academic studies. He won the Turkish Neurosurgical Society (TNS) Prof. Mahir Tevruz Research Award in 1990 and 1991, the TND Ali İskefyeli Research Award in 1991, the American Angiology Society Young Researcher Award in 1991, and the Hacettepe University Senate Science Achievement Award in 1991 and 1992 (Figure-4).



Figure-4. Receiving the TUBITAK Incentive Award from Mr. President Süleyman Demirel.

Between 1992 and 1993, he continued his research on cerebral ischemia and vasospasm in the Dr. Kassel Laboratory in the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at the University of Virginia, America.

In 1993, he returned to Turkey and began work as a specialist in the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at Başkent University (Figure-5).

In 1994, he worked as a research fellow in the Dr. Kassel Laboratory in the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at the University of Virginia, America for two months.



Figure-5. Visiting a patient at Baskent University.



Figure-6. The Department of Neurosurgery, Baskent University

In 1994, he received the title of Assistant Professor at the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at Başkent University, and he continued to work as an Associate Professor in the same department after passing the exam for this title in 1997 (Figure-6).

In 1997, he continued his research at the University of Virginia for two months, and he was selected as a visiting professor to the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School at the University of Virginia in October 1998.

In 1998, he won the TUBITAK incentive award and he received the title of Professor at the Neurosurgery Department of the Medical School

at Başkent University in 2002. He began to work as the editor in chief for the official journals of the Turkish Neurosurgical Society in 2007. He made an outstanding effort for the Turkish Neurosurgery journal to enter the SCI Expanded and PubMed indexes. The journal can be found in PubMed with an impact factor of 0.58.

Dr. Hakan Caner was selected as the 311th member of TNS on 12 December 1994. He performed many duties, including being a member of the board of the society. In 2004, he was selected as the fifteenth member of the spinal and peripheral nerve surgery group (SPNSG). He performed active duties in the management and meetings of SPNSG. In July 2009, he was accepted as a member of the Turkish Spine Society (TSS). He took an active duty in the curriculum committee of TSS, and he was accepted to the Board of TSS on 11 May 2013.

Dr. Caner was diagnosed with gastric cancer as a result of tests performed because of a long-term stomach ache in February 2011. This was very surprising, as he had no history of cancer in his family, he never used alcohol or smoked, and he engaged in regular sporting activities. The responsible factor was thought to be severe exposure to X-rays during kyphoplasty and percutaneous instrumentation operations. He never lost hope. He went to Japan for surgery and then returned to work after his recovery. He loved his job and treated many patients at an intensive rate. He participated in scientific meetings and worked in workshops until April 2013, when his disease recurred. He was treated with chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and made an honorable and resolute struggle against the complications of radiotherapy.

On 18 December 2013, he died due to gastric cancer, leaving his lovely family, colleagues and members of the Turkish Spine Society in deep sadness.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPINE SURGERY:

Most of the daily neurosurgical practices of Dr. Hakan Caner were composed of spine surgery. He dealt with mainly degenerative spine, trauma, infection, and adult spinal deformity cases. He participated in a spinal instrumentation practical course held by Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zileli in 1997. He successfully completed balloon kyphoplasty courses held in Murnau, Germany and Leiden, Holland in 2002, and obtained his certificates.

He was one of the most experienced spinal surgeons, performing balloon kyphoplasty for the first time in Turkey. He successfully applied this method to the treatment of osteoporotic vertebral fractures and vertebral fractures due to tumors^{1,3,4,6}. He worked to train young surgeons in kyphoplasty workshops, and he taught them this method in detail (Figure-7).

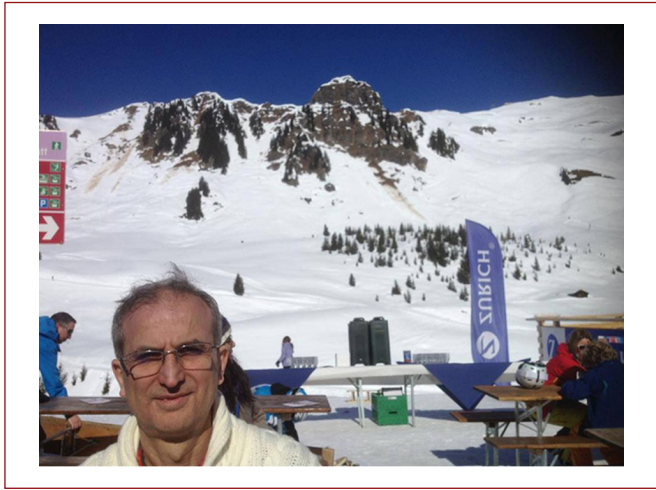


Figure-7. Prof. Dr. Hakan Caner at a meeting at which he worked as a trainer in Zurich, Switzerland.

After kyphoplasty, he focused on percutaneous instrumentation. He combined percutaneous instrumentation with minimally invasive transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion (Mis-TLIF), and often used this method in his daily practice⁵. He worked in national and international meetings to train others in Mis-TLIF surgery. He was one of the few surgeons able to carry out

atlantoaxial fusion².

CONCLUSION:

Prof. Dr. Hakan Caner was a model academic, who was hardworking, scientific, with great surgical abilities, and a gentleman with great humanity. He was a foresighted and kind instructor and was a loyal friend. His relationship with his patients set an example for his young surgeon students. Without a capricious and complex personality, he became an instructor to his students and assistants, and he also became a brother when necessary. Even when he was ill, he directed his assistants in their scientific research projects and encouraged them in being scientific.

His honorable place will always be protected in the hearts of his neurosurgeon colleagues, assistants, the members of Turkish Neurosurgery Society and me, Dr. Mehmet Nur Altınörs, who consciously took a path alongside Dr. Hakan Caner.

REFERENCES

1. Atalay B, Caner H, Gokce C, Altinors N. Kyphoplasty: 2 years of experience in a neurosurgery department. *Surg Neurol* 2005; 64 Suppl 2: S72-S76.
2. Calişaneller T, Yilmaz C, Ozdemir O, Caner H. Posterior atlantal lateral mass fixation technique with polyaxial screw and rod fixation system. *Turk Neurosurg* 2008; 18(2): 142-148.
3. Sonmez E, Yilmaz C, Caner H. Development of lumbar disc herniation following percutaneous vertebroplasty. *Spine* 2010; 35(3): E93-E95.
4. Sonmez E, Caner H. Vertebroplasty. *J Neurosurg Spine* 2011;14(2): 300; author reply 301.
5. Sonmez E, Coven I, Sahinturk F, Yilmaz C, Caner H. Unilateral percutaneous pedicle screw instrumentation with minimally invasive TLIF for the treatment of recurrent lumbar disk disease: 2 years follow-up. *Turk Neurosurg* 2013; 23(3): 372-378.
6. Yilmaz C, Atalay B, Caner H, Altinors N. Augmentation of a loosened sacral pedicle screw with percutaneous polymethylmethacrylate injection. *J Spinal Disord Tech* 2006; 19(5): 373-375.