

The resident and non-resident medical studentships in the medical education of Cluj County in the first Communist Age

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Abstract: This article presents the two forms of perfection of students in the medical higher education of Cluj County, the resident and non-resident medical studentships which were introduced in the Faculty of Medicine from Cluj in the interwar period continuing with certain interruptions in the first Communist Age. The article illustrates how the position of intern and extern physician could be filled in, in medicine. The social mark was the one that differentiated the medical examination in the Communist Age from the one from the interwar period. The social mark represented the social community activity of the student regarding the involvement of the student in various cultural and sanitary activities or voluntary work. The weight of this social mark was equal to the other specialized subjects from the examination. Under this social mark the Communist regime could mask the sanctioning of the political past and the poor political orientation of the students.

Key words: resident medical studentship, non-resident medical studentship, medical higher education, medical education in Cluj county, professional training and perfection, students, Communism.

Rezumat: Internatul și externatul în învățământul medical clujean în prima epocă comunistă. Acest articol prezintă cele două forme de perfecționare a studenților din învățământul superior medical clujean: internatul și externatul, care au fost introduse la Facultatea de Medicină din Cluj în perioada interbelică continuând cu unele întreruperi și în prima epocă comunistă. Articolul ilustrează modul în care se putea ocupa funcția de intern și extern în medicină. Nota

socială era cea care diferenția examenul din perioada comunistă de cel din perioada interbelică. Nota socială reprezenta activitatea social-obștească a studentului privind implicarea studentului în diverse activități culturale, sanitare sau de muncă voluntară. Ponderele acestor note sociale era egală cu celelalte materii de specialitate din examen. Sub această notă socială, regimul comunist putea masca sancționarea trecutului politic și slaba orientare politică a studenților.

Cuvinte cheie: internat, externat, învățământ superior medical, învățământ medical clujean, perfecționări profesionale, studenți, comunism.

The resident and non-resident medical studentships in medicine were two forms of training of medical students, by the French model and were introduced in our country for the first time in the medical university education in the capital, by the Romanian physician of French origin, Carol Davila. He had been invited in 1853 by Barbu Știrbei, the Lord of Țara Românească, to organize the sanitary service of the army.¹ Carol Davila got involved in the organization of Romanian medical and pharmaceutical education, but also in the foundation of the scientific societies: “Medical Society”, “Red Cross Society” and “Society of natural sciences” and the medical magazines, “Monitorul medical” and “Gazeta medicală”.

Non-resident medical studentship

In the clinics from Cluj, the non-resident medical studentship was introduced for the first time by the decision of the Council of Clinics on 17.03.1927. The period of non-resident medical studentship was one year. The selection of externs was made by a competition. The externs were employees paid from the funds of the university clinics, and they performed three rotations of three months each according to the subjects chosen at the beginning of internship. During this period the non-resident medical studentship was carried out in the following clinics: medical, surgical, dermatological, obstetrics and gynaecology, dental, urological, infantile, ophthalmological, neurological, Otho-rhino-laryngological, radiological and at the morgue of clinics.²

In 1942 the resident and non-resident medical studentships were reorganized, these two forms of training of students worked until 1951,

¹ Benone Duțescu, Maria Beuran, Mircea Beuran, *Internatul în medicină și farmacie: parte din ființa medicinei românești* [Resident studentship in medicine and pharmacy: part of the Romanian medicine], (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2020), 27-28.

² Ion Baci, *Institutul de Medicină și Farmacie Cluj* [Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj], (Timișoara: Întreprinderea Poligrafică Banatul, 1967), 234.

when by decision of the Ministry of Health no. 114346/21.VI.1951 ceased since July 1st the hiring of interns by competition and the remuneration of externs. In I.M.F. Cluj followed a period of six years of suspension of these two forms of professional training. In 1957 they came back to the organization and functioning of non-resident medical studentship as form of theoretical and practical training of students in medicine and pharmacy, decided by: H.C.M. no. 1003/1957; H.C.M. nr.1365/1957; H.C.M. no. 845/1957 and Decree no. 264/1957.³

By this form of education, the interns and externs had the opportunity to enrich their professional knowledge, learning first of all how to do a full and correct anamnesis. The observation sheets drawn up by externs and interns were checked by assistants and read during the visit of the professor. The medical education at the bed of patient was intensified by participation of externs and interns in the methods of clinical examination of patients, but also in the realization of medical acts.⁴ For example, in the Second World War, when a part of the medical staff was mobilized on the front, the interns and externs from Medical Clinic I fulfilled the role of on-duty physician for the clinic, giving first aid in various illnesses.⁵

If until 1942 the non-resident medical studentship was one year, in 1957 the duration of non-resident medical studentship was extended to two years. The non-resident medical studentship took place after the graduation of the third year of study, practically the years IV and V were dedicated to non-resident medical studentship. In the competition could participate the graduates who did not have overdue exams, but the places were limited. The positions of extern in medicine were filled in only based on competition. The competition took place in the autumn of each year, in the medical and pharmaceutical institutes from: Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Timișoara and Târgu-Mureș. The number of extern positions was set by the Ministry of Health for each university centre. The Regulations of 1957 issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Provisions, set out a period of non-resident medical studentship of two years. The non-resident medical studentship started on January 1st, each year. The externs performed four internships of 6 months each in the specialized services at choice, mentioned at the beginning of non-resident medical studentship. The number of places, themes and date of examination were published 90 days earlier in the brochure "Muncitorul

³*Ibidem.*

⁴ Gr. Gherman, "Internii și externii" ["Interns and Externs"], în: *Cinci ani la Sibiu un an la Cluj. Orientări și regulamente de activitate*, (Cluj: Tipografia "Casa Românească", 1947), 85.

⁵*Ibidem*, 86.

sanitar” but also in the offices of medical-pharmaceutical institutions. During the internships, the extern students received a monthly salary of Lei 400.⁶

The students from the faculties of general medicine and paediatrics who graduated at least 3 years of faculty could participate in the extern physician competition. The file of candidate for the extern physician competition had to contain:

- a) An “enrolment application”;
- b) Detailed autobiography and a completed student record;
- c) Certificate (proof) which shows that he/she is graduate of 3rd year of medicine;
- d) Report of social and professional activity checked by the institute rector's office;
- e) Health Certificate accompanied by a pulmonary radioscopic report.”⁷

The medical-pharmaceutical institutions checked the documents of candidates and enrolled those who fulfilled the necessary conditions. The marking was between 1 and 20 points. The minimum graduation mark was 10 points, the maximum graduation mark was 20 points and the minimum mark of admission for non-resident medical studentship was 15 points.

The extern physician competition in 1957 consisted of 2 written tests with a duration of three hours, one test in anatomy and the other test in medical-surgical propaedeutics. The admission mark was the arithmetic average mark of the two exams, which was completed by the mark for social activity, all 3 marks had equal weight.⁸

The Regulations for the extern physician examination specified that the professional and social activity test consisted of “investigation and marking” by the whole commission of the professional and social activity report submitted by the candidate. Each member of the commission marked the candidate with a mark from 1 to 20. If there were equal average marks at admission, the candidates were differentiated depending on the mark for professional and social activity. If at the social test, the candidates had the same marks, they took into account the mark from the written test. If in this case, there was a tie, for selection of the successful candidate, they proceeded by drawing lots.⁹

⁶ Serviciul Județean a Arhivelor Naționale Cluj (from now on S.J.A.N.C), Fond: Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie, Prorectorat didactic, *Internat și externat* [Resident and non-resident medical studentships], dos. 374/1957-1958, p. 15; 25.

⁷*Ibidem*, p. 26.

⁸*Ibidem*, p. 27.

⁹*Ibidem*, p. 29.

Following the extern physician competition in 1957, in I.M.F Cluj a number of 46 places were filled in, and three remained unoccupied. From the point of view of social origin, the admitted candidates had the following social origin: 9 workers, one poor peasant, 5 middle peasants, and 31 clerks.¹⁰

In 1964 the extern internship was introduced in outpatient clinic, and it was carried out in internal medicine offices from policlinics (cardiology, dietetics, gastro-enterology), urban sanitary districts and at the Regional Rescue Station. The extern internship in the sanitary anti-epidemics subjects (communal hygiene, school hygiene, food, work hygiene) was carried out in urban and rural sanitary districts, schools and enterprise dispensaries.¹¹

In the summer of year 1964 they tried to do a new reorganization of the medical education by generalization of extern internship which meant internships for students without the existence of a competition for the filling in of an extern position. The consequence of these decisions was noted immediately by the increase in the number of extern students in hospitals compared to the low number of guides, lack of obligation to participate in guards, etc. If the non-resident medical studentship included in 1964 all the students of the faculty of medicine, the number of places for resident medical studentship was quite limited, offering the opportunity for a reduced number of students to train as interns.¹²

The clinical internships in the major subjects are: internal medicine, surgery, gynaecology and paediatrics, they substituted the courses, the students were helped by the practical activity at the bed of patient, to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for a good professional qualification.¹³ The extern students received a monthly salary from the state, were enrolled in a trade union, did not have holidays, but they had the right to an annual leave of two weeks.

Resident medical studentship

The resident medical studentship in medicine was a European model which worked in Europe since 1732, the places were filled in by competition. Following the European model, our country introduced the

¹⁰*Ibidem*, p. 7.

¹¹ Ion Baciu, *Institutul de Medicină și Farmacie Cluj* [Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj], Timișoara, Întreprinderea Poligrafică Banatul, 1967, p. 236.

¹²Mihail Mihailide, "Internatul în Medicină...acum istorie" ["Resident Studentship in Medicine... now history"], în: *Viața medicală*, 31 iulie 2020; <https://www.viata-medicala.ro/aparitii-editoriale/internatul-in-medicina-acum-istorie-17923> (accessed August 2021).

¹³Iftimie Nesfântu, "Cum era odată externatul și internatul" ["How the non-resident and resident medical studentships used to be"], în: *Viața medicală*, 21 noiembrie 2013; <https://www.viata-medicala.ro/interviuri/cum-era-odata-externatul-si-internatul-7766> (accessed August 2021).

resident medical studentship in medicine. The first regulations regarding the intern competition in our country were issued in March 1860, and the competition took place one month later. On 13.11.1929 the Council of Clinics decided to introduce the resident medical studentship in the Faculty of Medicine from Cluj. This intern theoretical and practical perfection of students and young physicians functioned until 1951, when it was suspended by a ministerial decision. Six years followed when the intern position was not put out to competition, later they reintroduced the intern position in the autumn of year 1957. The main reason of interrupting this qualification was due to the implementation of the Soviet model in the Romanian medical education. Another cause could be the inevitable strife among students who attended the two forms of training and the students who did not have the opportunity to attend these forms of study, because of the limited number of places.¹⁴

Based on the directives of P.M.R. and of the Council of Ministers in 1957, the Ministry of Health announced the re-foundation of resident and non-resident medical studentships in medicine by competition. Those who were eligible for this position were the graduates of faculty and the students of 6th year, who had the extern internship completed. In order to improve the training of students in medicine and pharmacy, the Rector of IMF Cluj announced all the interested clinics that since January 1st, 1958 the positions of interns and externs in medicine were founded (department of general medicine and paediatrics), and the positions of interns in pharmacy were created.¹⁵

The difference between the two positions, extern and intern, was quite high, if we reflect on the work schedule of interns. The externs carried out their activities in the clinic until noon, then they left the hospital. The interns practically lived in the hospital. The interns left the hospital only when they had courses or for different cultural events. For cultural events, they had to get their permission to leave the hospital. The interns were much more involved in the medical act compared to externs, they participated sometimes alone in the guard service in clinic in certain important holidays over the year, the planning of guards was made, of course, with the approval of the head of clinic.¹⁶

¹⁴ Florea Marin, *Școala medicală clujeană. Continuatorii* [Medical School of Cluj. Continuers], Vol. IV, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2002, p. 339.

¹⁵ S.J.A.N.C, Fond: Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie, Prorectorat didactic, *Internat și externat* [Resident and non-resident medical studentships], dos. 374/1957-1958, p. 15.

¹⁶ Iftimie Nesfântu, „Cum era odată externatul și internatul” [“How the non-resident and resident medical studentships used to be”], în: *Viața medicală*, 21 noiembrie 2013; <https://www.viata-medicala.ro/interviuri/cum-era-odata-externatul-si-internatul-7766> (accessed August 2021).

The resident medical studentship had a period of 3 years, while there were 6 internships of 6 months each in different services, in the order mentioned by the intern in the commitment. The intern internship started on the first of January of each year. In 1957 interns were remunerated with a salary of Lei 500 every month, for the period when they were students and Lei 600 every month after the graduation of the faculty, but without benefiting from scholarship. Apart from this remuneration, the interns had free meals and free accommodation in the clinic.¹⁷ If the hospital could not grant these facilities, the intern student had right to a hostel. The full intern internship was assimilated with the internship set out by Decision C.M. no. 2415/953.¹⁸ According to regulations, the intern was obliged to live in the hospital, except for the married couples. Those who lived in the hospital were prohibited from hosting strangers in the room. Also, during the intern internship, they did not have the right to occupy any other position.¹⁹

The intern competition was organized by the five medical-pharmaceutical institutes from the country. The necessary information about the number of positions put out for competition by the Ministry of Health, the conditions for participation and themes were published in the brochure "Muncitorul sanitar" (Sanitary Worker) and at the offices of the medical-pharmaceutical institutes at least 90 days earlier. The enrolment file of the candidate had to contain: an enrolment application, detailed autobiography and a completed student record, a certificate issued by the rector's office which showed that he/she was in the last extern internship with competition and social and professional activity report checked by the Rector of the institute.²⁰

The tests for the intern competition in medicine were:

- a) "written test from anatomy and physiology, with a subject from anatomy and physiology (duration: 4 hours and marking up to 20 points);
- b) Written test from internal and surgical pathology with one subject of internal medicine and one subject of surgery (duration: 4 hours, marking up to 20 points)
- c) A practical test (marking up to 20 points);
- d) A professional and social activity test (marking up to 20 points)."²¹

¹⁷ S.J.A.N.C, Fond: Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie, Prorectorat didactic, *Internat și externat* [Resident and non-resident medical studentships], dos. 374/1957-1958, p. 15.

¹⁸*Ibidem*, p. 32.

¹⁹*Ibidem*, p. 37.

²⁰*Ibidem*, p. 32.

²¹*Ibidem*, p. 34.

The average mark of written tests below the mark 15 was eliminatory. Candidates were declared successful in competition in the decreasing order of average mark and within the limit of places, and the minimum average mark for graduation of competition was 15 points.²² The professional and social activity test consisted of the analysis and evaluation by the commission of the professional and social activity report submitted by the candidate at enrolment in competition, report checked by the rector of the Institute.²³

For the practical test of exam, the commission selected a number of patients with medical or surgical conditions which they examined and for which they set the diagnosis. The practical test consisted of examination of a patient, elaboration of observation sheet, and after a time for thinking, the candidate had to expose before the commission the clinical case he/she examined. For this test, the candidate was given 20 minutes for examination, 20 minutes for meditation and 15 minutes for exposure. For the elimination of any suspicions, for the practical examination safety measures were taken. The candidates who worked in the last month in the hospital where they were to take the practical test, were tested in the practical test in another hospital.²⁴

In order to complete the series of interns, in 1957 by derogation from article 7 of the Regulations for organization of intern examination, the students, graduates of year IV, who passed all examinations until the competition date were admitted for the intern competition in medicine. By derogation from these Regulations, the graduates of year V could be enrolled in the intern competition, and the duration of intern studentship for them was two years. In 1958 by derogation from Article 7 of Regulations regarding the occupation by competition of the positions of interns in medicine, the externs who had only one year of extern internship could be admitted.²⁵

In December 1957, in I.M.F. Cluj a number of 49 places for externs and 24 places for interns were put out to competition. The Ministry of Health and Social Provisions by the Staff and Education Division, decided that the remaining places which will be temporarily filled in, respectively 27 places of externs and 11 places of interns, would not be displayed for competition, but proposals would be made by the Institute management

²²*Ibidem.*

²³*Ibidem*, p. 36.

²⁴*Ibidem*, p. 46.

²⁵*Ibidem*, p. 38.

and the mass organizations for their occupation.²⁶ They did not specify expressly the organizations, but it is understood that they were the political party organizations. The 24 places put out to competition for interns were distributed as follows: 12 places for the students of year V, with a duration of three years and other 12 places for the students of year VI with a duration of two years.²⁷ Most of the students enrolled in the extern and intern competitions were members of U.T.M. The candidates declared successful in the intern competition of that year had the following social origin: one worker, 3 poor peasants, one middle peasant, 18 clerks and one candidate from other social strata.²⁸

After the performance of intern internship, the best graduates were recommended to be recruited for the higher education to fill in a Junior Teaching Assistant position. These recommendations made by the Institute were discussed with the local party bodies, then were forwarded to the General Division of Staff and Perfection of Personnel in the Ministry of Education. The intern graduates could fill in vacancies from the sanitary network as secondary physician or a position of intern researcher in research institutes.²⁹

A document of 1964 reflected the influence of political party in the distribution of candidates graduates of resident medical studentship, in the higher medical education of Cluj County. The social origin of boyar, but also the label put to her father who was a former Iron-Guardist, did not allow the graduate Elvira Axente, to fill in a position of teaching assistant in higher education. For a correct documentation, the I.M.F. Cluj requested the Popular Council of the district Vatra Dornei to present the material situation of the graduate Axente. In the answer received from the Popular Council, it showed that her father owned a pub in the commune Dona Candrei. This situation was discussed with the local party bodies, and they agreed that Elvira Axente could not be proposed for higher education. This document was preserved because of the petition that the graduate forwarded to the Ministry of Education and the correspondence between the ministry and the institute, but this case cannot be classified as an

²⁶*Ibidem*, p. 32.

²⁷*Ibidem*, p. 16.

²⁸*Ibidem*, p. 7.

²⁹Arhiva Universității de Medicină și Farmacie "Iuliu Hațieganu" (Arhiva U.M.F. "Iuliu Hațieganu"), Serviciul personal, *Numiri și promovări în funcțiuni* [Appointments and promotions in positions], dos. 41/1959-1961, 2-8.; Ion Baci, *Institutul de Medicină și Farmacie Cluj* [Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj], Timișoara, Întreprinderea Poligrafică Banatul, 1967, 235.

isolated one. In another order of ideas, this document helps us understand better the criteria for selection of teaching staff in higher education.³⁰

If we analyse the criteria for admission to resident medical studentship since 1957, we can say that the social mark indirectly represented a criterion for selection in the graduation of university medical education, considering that this mark represented an equal weight to the other marks in competition, and in case of equal average marks, the first criterion for differentiation was the social mark. Under this social mark, they could mask the sanctioning of political past or the poor political orientation of the candidate.

In 1971 there was a reorganization of the resident medical studentship consisting of diversification of specialties. The resident medical studentship started from the 6th year of faculty and extended for a period of 3 years. After the completion of resident medical studentship, the graduates could enrol for the second internship. For this period, the file of the candidate from the resident medical studentship, apart from the passage of admission tests with a very good average mark, had to contain the political approval and a mark for social community activity.³¹

In 1959 they reintroduced the examination for the attestation of qualification of primary physician and specialist physician, examination which had been suspended in 1948. For the attestation of specialist physician, the candidates had to have worked in the specialty for which they competed and have a length of service of at least 8 years, and for the primary physician the length of service in profession was 10 years. The examination for specialist physician set out a written test, a practical test and a theoretical test. The final mark represented the arithmetic mean of the three tests to which the social mark was added. There were in that period a few physicians, former political convicted persons, who could not participate in examination, because they were not given the minimum mark necessary for social activity.³² Also, in 1959 the teaching staff who were to take the examination of primary or specialist physician, were downgraded in the social mark, because they had a private medical office, were not party members and those with political membership were

³⁰Arhiva U.M.F. "Iuliu Hațieganu", Serviciul personal. *Corespondență cu Ministerul Învățământului* [Correspondance with the Ministry of Education], dos. 22/1964-1965, 3.

³¹Mihail Mihailide, "Internatul în Medicină...acum istorie" ["Resident Studentship in Medicine... now history"], în: *Viața Medicală*, 31 iulie 2020; <https://www.viata-medicala.ro/aparitii-editoriale/internatul-in-medicina-acum-istorie-17923> (accessed August 2021).

³²Florea Marin, *Școala medicală clujeană. Continuatorii* [Medical School of Cluj. Continuator], Vol. IV, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2002, 340-341.

downgraded for non-involvement in political activity and trade union activity.³³

Conclusions

The two forms of professional training by filling in the position of extern and intern in medicine, benefited from a quite limited number of students, first of all because for a period of 6 years no competitions were organized for these positions, and secondly, because of the limited number of places put out to competition. The resident medical studentship represented a "pipeline" from which the young teaching staff came. After the finalization of resident medical studentship, the best graduates were recommended for higher education provided that they had "a sound social origin". The social mark introduced in the admission examination for resident and non-resident medical studentships was a means by which the Communist regime influenced the selection of the future teaching staff. Under the social mark the students could be sanctioned for their political past, for the passive activity in U.T.M. organization and for insufficient participation in the social community activity.

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³³Arhiva U.M.F. "Iuliu Hațieganu", Serviciul personal. *Numiri și promovări în funcțiuni* [Appointments and promotions in positions], dos. 41/1959-1961, 2-8.

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