In Memory of Leonid Gittik: Academic Readings, Dedicated to the Anniversary of Prominent Ukrainian Scientist

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Academic readings, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Leonid Gittik, were held in Lutsk, Ukraine between June 8, 2016 and June 10, 2016. Leonid Gittik was a prominent Ukrainian neuroscientist. He graduated from Kharkiv Medical Institute in 1951, and started a career as a neurologist. Later, in 1953 he moved to Lutsk, where he continued to work as a neurologist. He defended his PhD and Doctor of Science theses in 1960 and 1970, respectively. The main area of medical scientific interests of Leonid Gittik were studies of different neurological brain dysfunctions, mainly – chorea. In 1971, he became the first Head of Human and Animal Physiology Department in Lutsk Pedagogical Institute (now – Eastern European National University, Lutsk, Ukraine). Working in this position, he created the Scientific School of Brain Electrical Neurophysiology. The main directions of this school were the studies on brain functional development, differential psychophysiology, brain mechanisms of creativity. Leonid Gittik did his best for providing these studies with the most modern, state-of-the-art methods and techniques, especially – by using electrophysiological equipment, thus creating a leading center of EEG and ERP studies in Ukraine. He died in 2004 on his way from laboratory in EENU to the Neurological Department of Volyn Region Hospital. During his life, Leonid Gittik wrote 282 scientific publications, including 12 monographs and textbooks.

Over 100 participants took part in the academic readings, presenting neuroscience and neurological schools from all parts of Ukraine. The international links were presented by Dr. Bolotina from Israel and Dr. Anand from India. The paper collection of the readings also included abstracts from Poland, Georgia, and Lithuania.

The event raised keen interest among leading Ukrainian scientists, which resulted in a great number of oral presentations, according to the request of the participants. At the beginning of the conference, the invitations were presented by Ihor Kotsan, Director of Eastern European National University and Poruchynskiy Andriy, Dean of Biological Faculty. They shortly described the life of Leonid Gittik, his contribution to Ukrainian neurology and neuroscience, and the current state of the neuroscience school founded by Leonid Gittik. They also presented a documentary film about Professor Gittik. During the first plenary session day, an oral presentation on the current state of epilepsy treatment in Ukraine by Dr. Schulha and presentation by Professor Mackarchuk on functional brain asymmetry with words of contribution of Lutsk electrophysiology school and Professor Gittik in particular in studying of this problem were presented.

The key lectures during the second day included the comprehensive overview by Professor Anand of using behavioral neuroscience approaches in the development of biotherapeutics, with focus on using animal models and

stem cells. The problems of neurophysiological development and speech processing mechanisms were discussed in lectures by leading Ukrainian scientists. The Lviv School of Physiology presented a comprehensive lecture on the actual problems in studying mitochondrial breathing mechanisms, focusing on high-level strategies in realization of that function.

After the plenary session, the reading continued to work in section format. The following sections were presented: actual problems of neurophysiology and psychophysiology, physiology of human visceral systems, structural and functional features of sensor and motor human functions, actual problems of clinical neurology, bioethical aspects of medical and biological studies. Great interest was raised by the following presentations: the ERP study of What–Where systems organization in sportsmen of different sport types by Romaniuk et al., biofeedback impact on the sensorimotor reactions of children with attention deficit disorder by Kachynska et

al., the ERP study of multimodal subjective representation formation by Kuznietsov et al., the EEG features of classifying visual information in deaf persons by Yukhymenko et al. Intensive discussions were held on the presentations of Babskiy et al. on anti-tumor medicine impact on mitochondrial activity, Makarenko on current problems of bioethics in Ukraine, Zay et al. on the impact of fullerenes on the dynamics of muscle construction, Dobrostan et al. on changes of heart rhythm regulation mechanisms under conditions of psychological load stress, Tretyak et al. on heart rate changes during cognitive activity.

The high level of lectures and presentations was considered by the participants as the best argument in honor of Professor Gittik's memory.

The resulting event was the opening of museum in honor of Leonid Gittik in Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University. Professor Gittik still lives in the hearts and deeds of his students.