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Anniversaries

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TO THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROFESSOR OLEKSANDR FILTS

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Summary. The article is dedicated to the life and professional journey of Oleksandr Filt – a renowned Ukrainian psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and scholar. It outlines the key milestones of his career and his contributions to the development of psychiatry, psychotherapy, and organizational work in Ukraine and Europe. Particular attention is paid to Oleksandr Filt's innovative concepts, academic achievements, and authority among the Ukrainian and international psychotherapeutic community.

Keywords: Oleksandr Filt, psychiatry, psychotherapy, Lviv National Medical University, Ukrainian Umbrella Association of Psychotherapists, schizophrenia, addictive disorders.



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This year, Professor Oleksandr Filts has completed his youthful era by celebrating 70 years of dedication to God, Nature, Community, and Family. As he has often shared throughout these years, his greatest ambition has been to promote the development of his birthplace, Lviv, and his Ukrainian heritage in its broadest sense. Oleksandr Filts was born during the USSR in 1954, a time when the Soviet regime viewed any affinity for Ukrainian heritage and Lviv's long-standing traditions as obvious disloyalty or even hostility. 'As a fellow psychiatrist, I can confirm that in the archives of Lviv Psychiatric Hospital, one can still come across medical records from the 1970s and 1980s written by Oleksandr Filts in Ukrainian – a practice deemed 'audacious' at the time,' noted Natalia Ryshkovska.

Oleksandr Filts comes from the Hamchakevych-Filts family on his father's side, while his mother belonged to the Paventskiy family. Roman Hamchakevych, his great-grandfather, was the principal of the Ukrainian gymnasium in Przemyśl; his other great-grandfather, Antoni Paventskiy, founded and edited the first Ukrainian newspaper in Lviv, *Zorya Halytska* (The Galician Star). Oleksandr Filts went on to continue his family's academic legacy. The medical profession was destined for him by family tradition: his father was a prominent surgeon, a professor, and the Head of the Department of Surgery, while his mother was an Associate Professor at the Department of Ophthalmology at Lviv State Medical Institute (the former name of Lviv National Medical University).

Oleksandr Filts was an average student at School No. 8 in Lviv with a focus on advanced German language instruction until his 'accidental' graduation with honors. 1971, he was enrolled in Lviv State Medical Institute, graduating with honors. While a student for three years, he also attended the evening Mathematics Faculty at Ivan Franko University, which ultimately influenced his choice of the most 'abstract,' as many believe, medical specialty – psychiatry. He was introduced to emergency psychiatric care during his first job at an ambulance service from 1978 to 1980. He then spent one year working as a psychiatrist at Lviv Psychiatric Hospital. Subsequently, he pursued his 'family obligation' of an academic career. He completed clinical residency, postgraduate studies, and part-time doctoral research at the Mental Health Center of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences in Moscow. Later, in independent Ukraine, he had to face allegations of psychiatry abuse and 'experiments on dissidents' who were diagnosed with schizophrenia for political reasons and a threat of losing his medical license. However, it was revealed that Oleksandr Filts was the first and, at the time, the only psychiatrist at the Mental Health Center whose dissertation topics were unrelated to schizophrenia, and these accusations were proven false and subsequently dismissed.

After completing his postgraduate studies in 1988, Oleksandr Filts worked for five years as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychiatry at Lviv State Medical Institute. In 1993, he became Head of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy of the Faculty of Postgraduate Education of the Danylo Halytsky National Medical University in Lviv.

In 2005, Oleksandr Filts's professional path led him to practical psychiatric care; for ten years, he worked as the Chief Physician of the Lviv Regional Clinical Psychiatric Hospital (LRCPH). In 2008, he was awarded the title of the 'Merited Doctor of Ukraine.' In 2015, he returned to his job as the Head of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy.

The second fruitful field of Oleksandr Filts' activity was his education and organization of training in psychotherapy. In 1992-1999, he completed his training as a group psychoanalyst (Altausee, Austria) and, with a team of like-minded colleagues, psychiatrists and psychologists, as well as support from Professor Alfred Pritz (founder and Rector of the Sigmund Freud University in Vienna, Austria), went on to launch a network of educational projects in group psychotherapy, first in the town of Truskavets near Lviv, and later expanded to most regional cities in Ukraine.

In 2001-2003, he trained in psychoanalytic psychotherapy in Ulm, Germany. The collaboration with the Clinic for Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy of Ulm University and German psychotherapy researchers – Professor Horst Kaechele and Professor Dan Pokorny – that was launched at that time resulted in a unique study assessing the effectiveness of inpatient psychodynamic psychotherapy, completed at the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy by Assistant Professor Oksana Lyzak.

Since 1992, Oleksandr Filts has represented Ukraine's psychotherapeutic community at the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP)—first as an EAP member from Ukraine and later after the Ukrainian Umbrella Association of Psychotherapists (UUAP) was founded as its President.

Oleksandr Filts served as President of the European Association for Psychotherapy from 2005 to 2007; he has also been President of the UUAP since 1996, a position he has held unopposed.

Through the joint efforts of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy faculty, psychotherapy was integrated into the curriculum.

In 2010, Oleksandr Filts and his colleagues founded the Psychoanalytic Institute of Mental Health in Lviv, and 2019, the Ukrainian Institute of Psychotherapy of Addictions (UIPA) and the International Association of Psychotherapy of Addictions (IAPA).

In 2017, Professor Filts' long-standing collaboration with Austrian and Hungarian colleagues was recognized with the titles of Honorary Professor of the Sigmund Freud University (of the Faculties of Psychotherapy and Medicine) and Honorary Professor of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association.

Oleksandr Filts' academic achievements reflect his interest in overlapping fields of psychiatry and psychotherapy. He is the author of several original publications, the main of them including: 'Toward a Cohesive Clinical Interpretation of Mental Disorders in the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic: An Expert Opinion' [9], 'The Phenomenon of Inferiority and Depression' [8], 'Characteristics of the Existential Content of Patients with Comorbid Anxiety-Asthenic Disorders' [1], 'On the Definition of Psychotherapy and Its Methodological Grounding' [6], and 'The Factor of Musical Ear and Peculiarities of Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia' [3].

Oleksandr Filts is the author of an original systematic model of basic psychiatric syndromes [2], an innovative theoretical concept of addictions [4], and an original concept of schizophrenia as a disorder of the principle of obviousness [5, 7].

As you can see, Oleksandr Filts, a well-known specialist, outstanding scholar, master of his craft, and patriot of his homeland, boasts considerable work.

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