Journal of Iranian Dental Association (JIDA)

Review

A Tribute to a Pioneering Scholar in Periodontology, Photobiomodulation and Medical Lasers

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Abstract

It is with profound sorrow and a deep sense of loss that we mourn the untimely passing of Professor Reza Fekrazad, a visionary pioneer, an indefatigable scholar, and a beloved mentor whose life was dedicated to the relentless pursuit of knowledge and the healing power of light. His departure leaves an immense void not only in the fields of periodontology, medical lasers, photobiomodulation (PBM), and photodynamic therapy, but also in the hearts of the countless students, colleagues, and patients whose lives he touched with his wisdom, compassion, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Professor Fekrazad was more than a scientist; he was a luminary who illuminated the darkest corners of biomedical research with his innovative spirit and tireless curiosity. His work transcended borders and disciplines, bridging the gap between fundamental photobiology and transformative clinical applications. From the lecture halls of Tehran to the global congresses of WALT and IADR, his voice was a guiding force, always advocating for rigorous science, ethical practice, and the empowerment of the next generation of researchers.

While his recent passing marks an irreplaceable loss to the global scientific community, his extraordinary legacy is not one of absence but of enduring presence. Every guideline he helped author, every student he mentored, every groundbreaking paper he published, and every institution he founded stands as a testament to a life lived with purpose and passion. His contributions will continue to illuminate the path forward for countless researchers and clinicians worldwide, serving as a perpetual beacon of inspiration for all who strive to harness the therapeutic potential of light in the service of humanity.

Though we mourn his physical absence, we take solace in the certainty that his intellectual and moral legacy will endure for generations to come. The torch he carried so brilliantly has now passed to us, and it is our solemn responsibility and our greatest honor to carry it forward with the same dedication, integrity, and visionary spirit that defined his remarkable life.

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In Memoriam: Professor Reza Fekrazad, DDS, MSc, FLD, FICD

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Fig.1. The late Professor Reza Fekrazad in his late 50s.

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A Life of Distinguished Service and Scientific Leadership

Professor Fekrazad dedicated his life to advancing the therapeutic applications of light in medicine and dentistry. His career was characterized by a seamless integration of four core roles: dedicated researcher, inspiring educator, visionary scientific administrator, and influential professional policy-maker.

He served as the Vice-President and Director of Publications for the World Association for Photobiomodulation and Laser Therapy (WALT), a position he held with distinction from 2024 until his passing. His leadership extended over many years, including a tenure as Secretary-General of WALT (2016-2021), where he was instrumental in shaping the association's global direction.

In Iran, he was the Immediate Past President of the Iranian Medical Laser Association (2012-2023), a role in which he championed the development and standardization of laser medicine in his home country. He also founded and served as the Head of the Radiation Sciences Research Center at AJA University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, creating a vital hub for scientific inquiry. Within the same institution, he held the position of Professor in the Department of Periodontology at the School of Dentistry, where his influence on undergraduate training was profound and far-reaching, shaping the clinical foundations of countless dental professionals.

An Unwavering Commitment to Education and Knowledge Dissemination

Professor Fekrazad's impact as an educator was monumental. He was a visionary who founded and led the first Fellowship course in Laser Dentistry in Iran at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, creating the foundational infrastructure for specialized training in this field. His dedication to nurturing the next generation was recognized internationally when he received the prestigious *Excellence in Education Award* from the IADR Lasers & Bio-photonics Group in 2025. His educational philosophy was not limited to formal teaching; he was an active and generous mentor to more than 35 general dentistry theses and 17 postgraduate theses, shaping the careers of numerous young scientists. Moreover, his commitment to undergraduate education at AJA University of Medical Sciences ensured that the principles of periodontology and laser applications were instilled at the very beginning of a dentist's professional journey.

His prolific editorial work further amplified his educational influence. He served on the editorial boards of multiple prestigious scientific journals, including:

- *Associate Editor* of *Photobiomodulation, Photomedicine, and Laser Surgery*
- *Editorial Board Member* of the *Journal of Lasers in Medical Sciences*
- *Guest Editor* for a Special Issue of *Dentistry Review* (Elsevier)

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As Director of Publications for WALT, he was the driving force behind the coordination, updating, and dissemination of critical clinical guidelines, ensuring that evidence-based practices were accessible to practitioners around the globe.

A Legacy of Pioneering Research

Professor Fekrazad's research contributions were both extensive and seminal. His work explored the fundamental mechanisms and clinical applications of photobiomodulation and photodynamic therapy in areas ranging from periodontology and implant dentistry to tissue regeneration, pain management, and infection control. He was a co-author on the WALT position paper on "***Photobiomodulation for stem cell modulation and regenerative medicine***" published in 2025, demonstrating his continued commitment to defining the scientific standards for the field.

His scholarly output was remarkable. At the time of the WALT's 2023 profile, his record included:

- 141 articles in international journals and 20 in domestic journals
- Authorship or co-authorship of 9 chapters in international books and 4 books in Persian
- Over 155 presentations at international congresses and 182 at national congresses

His work has been widely cited, and in a recent review of his ScienceDirect/Scopus profile, he has 229 documents and over 4,500 citations.

His research was not confined to the laboratory. He was a passionate advocate for translational science, seeking to bridge the gap between bench and bedside. His recent work explored the innovative hypothesis that biophotonics could modulate the oral-gut-brain axis, presenting a potential non-invasive strategy for managing gut-related and neurological disorders. He also served as the founder and chair of the ***International Network of Photomedicine and Photodynamic Therapy (INPMPDT)*** within the ***Universal Scientific Education and Research Network (USERN)***.

A Final Thought

While Professor Reza Fekrazad is no longer with us in physical presence, his voice, clear, resolute, and filled with intellectual passion, will continue to resonate across the corridors of academic institutions, research laboratories, and clinical settings for decades to come. His words live on through the groundbreaking research that has reshaped our understanding of photobiomodulation and photodynamic therapy; through the countless students and young researchers whom he nurtured with patience, generosity, and an unwavering belief in their potential; through the clinical guidelines and position papers he helped forge, which will continue to guide practitioners in the safe and effective use of medical lasers; and through the enduring institutions he founded and led with visionary foresight, each standing as a monument to his commitment to scientific progress and human welfare.

His life's work was far more than a collection of publications, awards, and professional accolades. It was a living testament to the profound and often underestimated power of science to alleviate suffering, restore health, and transform lives. Professor Fekrazad embodied the ideal that one dedicated individual, armed with curiosity, integrity, and an unshakeable sense of purpose, can indeed leave an indelible mark upon the world. He did not merely study the healing properties of light; he became a beacon of light himself, illuminating the path for others, dispelling the shadows of ignorance and doubt, and inspiring all who crossed his path to strive for excellence in both their professional endeavors and their personal conduct.

His memory will forever serve as a wellspring of inspiration, not only for those who had the privilege of knowing him personally, but for the entire global community of photomedicine, a field he so deeply enriched with his intellect, his humanity, and his unyielding dedication to the betterment of humankind. In the quiet hum of a laser in a clinical setting, in the eager questions of a student beginning their research journey, and in the pages of the journals he helped shape, his spirit endures.

We bid farewell to a giant among scientists, a sage among educators, and a friend among colleagues. May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy continue to guide us toward a brighter, healthier, and more compassionate future. Rest in peace, dear Professor. Your light will never fade.

A Brief Prayer

O Lord, envelop the soul of Professor Reza Fekrazad in Your infinite mercy and eternal light. Forgive his shortcomings, elevate his station, and grant him peace in Your heavenly abode. Comfort his family, students, and colleagues in their grief, and let his legacy of healing and knowledge continue to bless humanity. May he rest in peace.

Ameen.

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