High Level Greek-Turkish Cooperation in Cardiac Surgery

Report (January 2003) by George Politis

Leading cardiac surgeons from Greece and Turkey presented two new methods during seminars that took place at Athens on 22-22 November 2002 and at Istanbul in 23-24 January 2003. During their respective visits, each surgeon performed surgery on Greek and Turkish patients.

The first part of this Greek-Turkish medical cooperation took place in Athens on the 21st and 22nd November 2002 which included a surgical operation, press conference, press release and a lecture in the hospital auditorium attended by 50 medical doctors. The Greek Ministers of Health and Foreign Affairs as well as the President of Greece were invited. Several Greek and Turkish national newspapers, radio and TV stations, including the Turkish Hurriyet newspaper, covered the event. It was sponsored by the Medtronic Corporation under the auspices of HSNES, which was represented by Dr Georgios Politakis.

The second meeting between the two physicians took place in Istanbul on the 23rd and 24th of January 2003. Once again the two men jointly performed live operations followed by a well-attended lecture. As in Athens, Turkish and Greek national media covered the event.

This cooperation for the treatment of serious cardiac cases and the exchange of experiences from the implementation of innovative techniques in the field of cardiac surgery are being put into action by the scientific director of the cardiac surgery clinic of the Henry Dunan Hospital in Athens, Dr Sotiris Prapas, and by leading Turkish cardiac surgeon Dr Belhhan Akpinar, director of cardiac surgery at the Florence Nightingale University Hospital in Istanbul.

The basic goal of this collaboration is to familiarize the Turkish centre with the "Π-graft" technique adapted by Dr Prapas and in turn for the Henry Dunan Hospital to implement the new surgical treatment of chronic atrial fibrillation as demonstrated by Dr Akpinar.

While presenting the prospects of this Greek-Turkish cooperation, Dr Prapas noted the "the borders in science, and much more in medicine, have fallen a long time ago." He also emphasized the need for every modern hospital to observe all developments and offer its experience by adopting new techniques. Dr Prapas recognised his Turkish colleague's impressive work and his achievement in opening new avenues in the surgical treatment of chronic atrial fibrillation.

From his side, Dr Akpinar expressed his enthusiasm from the cooperation with the Henry Dunan Hospital and characterized the "Π-graft" technique adapted by Dr Prapas as "one of the more interesting developments in the field of cardiac surgery in recent years."

Both cardiac surgeons in their lectures thanked among others the HSNES for its support and encouraged the society for similar initiatives in the future.