



PROF. NECDET ŞÜKRÜ ALTUN, M.D.

PROF. DR. NECDET ŞÜKRÜ ALTUN

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SUMMARY

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun was born in February 13, 1957, in Artvin. In 1975, he started his education in Ankara University Faculty of Medicine. He started his speciality education in Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology. In May, 1987, he became specialist and one year later, he turned back as assistant professor to the clinic where he became specialist. In 1994, he became associate professor, and professor in 2000. He became founder and developer of Spinal Surgery in Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology. He conveyed his knowledge and accumulation about spinal surgery in various cities of United States of America and Europa. For a period of time, he was in board membership of Turkish Spinal Association. In this period of time, he published his "Degenerative Spinal Diseases" book that he performed its editorship with Tarık Yazar. He was assistant of Mr. Emin Alıcı who is founder and editor of our journal which is media organ of our association for a long time. He performed co-chairman duty of Tenth Turkish Spinal Congress. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun who had many international publication, trained many students and Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology Specialists and Spinal Surgeons. After 2005, he started to work with Prof. Dr. Ali Şehirlioğlu. Prof. Altun is a real frontier of Turkish Spinal Surgery with his scientific contributions and for everyone he is a close friend and he is holded in high honor in Spinal family by being warm-heartedness, the most colored and the most heartfelt person with his social aspects and personality.

Key Words: Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun, Degenerative Spinal Diseases, Tuberculosis spondylitis, Scoliosis, Gazi University Faculty of Medicine

Proof Level: Biography, Level V.

ÖZET:

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun, 13 Şubat 1957 günü Artvin'de doğdu. 1975 yılında Ankara Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesine başladı. 1982 yılında Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Ortopedi ve Travmatoloji Anabilim Dalı'nda uzmanlık eğitimine başladı. 1987 Mayıs ayında uzman oldu ve uzman olduğu kliniğe 1 yıl sonra yardımcı doçent olarak geri döndü. 1994'de doçent, 2000 yılında profesör oldu. Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesinde, Ortopedi ve Travmatoloji Anabilim dalında Omurga Cerrahisinin kurucusu ve geliştiricisi oldu. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avrupa'nın çeşitli kentlerinde omurga cerrahisi konusundaki bilgi ve birikimini artırdı. Bir dönem Türk Omurga Derneği yönetim kurulu üyesi yaptı. Bu dönem içinde, Tarık Yazar ile birlikte editörlüğünü yaptığı "Dejeneratif Omurga Hastalıkları" kitabını yayınladı. Uzun süre derneğimizin yayın organı olan dergimizin kurucusu ve editörü Emin Alıcı Hocamın yardımcılığını yaptı. Onuncu Türk Omurga Kongresinin başkanlığını yaptı. Birçok uluslararası yayını olan Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun, birçok öğrenci, Ortopedi ve Travmatoloji uzmanı ve Omurga Cerrahisi yetiştirdi. 2005 yılından sonra Prof. Dr. Ali Şehirlioğlu ile birlikte çalışmaya başladı. Prof. Altun, bilimsel katkılarıyla Türk Omurga Cerrahisinin gerçek bir öncüsü ve sosyal yönleriyle ve kişiliği ile en renkli, en candan kişisi ve sevgi dolu oluşuyla Omurga ailesindeki herkesin yakın dostu ve baş tacıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun, Dejeneratif Omurga Hastalıkları, Tüberküloz spondilit, skolyoz, Gazi Tıp.

Kanıt Düzeyi: Biyografi, Düzey V.

INTRODUCTION:

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun was born in February 13, 1957 in Artvin. In 1975, He started his education in Ankara University Faculty of Medicine. In 1982, he started his speciality education in Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology. In May, 1987, he became specialist and one year later, he turned back as assistant professor to the clinic where he became specialist. In 1994, he became associate professor, and professor in 2000. He became founder and developer of Spinal Surgery in Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology⁹.

I knew Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun during my assistantship. Together, we went to Texas Scottish Rite Hospital in Texas, Dallas city. Approximately for two weeks, we worked together, entered operative surgeries, attended courses. This trip made me understand that he is such a good person, humorous and full of love, and led me love him as my own elder brother, and it did not happen only because he is from Artvin, it means that he is my fellow townsman (Figure-1).



Figure-1. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun and I (Prof. Dr. İ. Teoman Benli) in Texas Scottish Rite Hospital, 1989.

Together, we organized joint courses with SSK (Social Insurance Institution) Ankara Dışkapı Hospital and Gazi University. It was the first in the history of SSK. Together, we entered Managing Board of Turkish Spinal Association. In this period, we, together, became *assistant editors* of “*The Journal of Turkish Spinal Surgery*” which is official media organ of our association and we published all issues of journal up to 2005, we provided regular publication of the journal. Again in this period, in 2006, we published “*Spinal Infections*” book in my editorship and “*Degenerative Spinal Diseases*” book which Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun undertaken editorship with Prof. Dr.

Tarik Yazar^{4,6}. This year, we made extended and updated publications of same books^{7,8}.

He started to work with Prof. Dr. Ali Şehirlioğlu after 2005. Prof. Altun is a real frontier of Turkish Spinal Surgery with his scientific contributions and for everyone he is a close friend and he is holded in high honor in Spinal family by being warm-heartedness, the most colored and the most heartfelt person with his social aspects and personality.

BIOGRAPHY:

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun was born in Veliköy which is a town in Şavşat district of Artvin in February 13, 1957 (Figure-2).

His father was the manager of Veliköy that was township once, at that time. He started his primary education in Muratlı town of Borçka district of Artvin. After 1960 coup, his father was assigned to this township which its old name was Maradit (Figure-3).

The very first memories of Prof. Altun are belong there. I would like to share some sections that he wrote for a journal about what he lived through⁵.

“Yuri Gagarin, President Kennedy and Maradit”:

A side ripped black and white photograph. The date is 1963, the place is Maradit (Muratlı), I am six years old. A button-front, tight-fitting jacket on me, it is crumpled, my knickerbockers, front belted plastic shoes on my feet. My sister is in the middle, with her French braid hair on both sides, she has a side laced dress on her. Right next to her, my uncle's son is there, with a similar wear with mine. This is my oldest photograph, there is nothing about before. My memories are also like this. The things that I can remember before the date of this photograph, are very obscure. But it is not known whether it is with the effect of this photograph or not, the memories that belong to my six years old, are still in memory with their all freshness.

Maradit... The first things that I remember about life, belong there. A small township center. It was built on a very green slope that lies toward Çoruh with a nice gradient, red colored roof tiled houses that were interspersed among hazelnut and tea gardens, narrow and twisted road between cornfields and Çoruh River that streams murky with a great howl. Opposite shore of Çoruh is Russia, another Maradit at the opposite shore, like a reflection on the mirror, almost same.

A small brook that stream from the hills by twisting, was dividing township into two parts. Highway that comes from Borçka, was reaching the square, a wall of a school at the right upper of square, was facing with the brook. There was a wooden minaret mosque at the right of square, right next to mosque, there were building of township management and PTT. Right next to them, there was the shop of Hüseyin (Gezmiş) uncle. Opposite the square, there were village coffee house and a few more shops.



Figure-2. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun, with his elder sister and brother. He is the one who have an impish look (at the right to you).



Figure-3. Maradit (Muratlı) Township, Borçka, Artvin, 1962. The pose of the manager of Township.

We were living on border, in a narrow geography where it was compressed by another country and Çoruh, at the slope of a mountain. I was six, my world was also small as my age. The biggest adventure for me, was going to Borçka with hand starting jeep of uncle Sadık. There was nothing more for me. The beyond was bordered by Çoruh. Besides, there was another country at opposite shore.

My father was manager of township. It was our third year in Maradit. Our home was a big one that can be reached by climbed up by using a narrow walkway which reaches up by twisting up. We were living at a half and İskender Granddad (Dizdar) at the other half. Our home had a small kitchen and another two rooms. One of them was facing with back garden and the other was facing with walkway. From the window, at the behind of tea and hazelnut gardens, Çoruh River and village at Russian side, slopes and hills, could be seen. There was a camellia at behind of locust tree at the end of the garden. In hot summer nights, in shaky light of pressure lamp, deep conversations were being made, teas were being drunk, cookies and mine pies of my mother, were being ate. Conversations were being cut by starting of news on radio, my father and İskender grandfather were listening news carefully. After the end of news, folk songs from Yurttan Sesler Chorus or chorus and solo songs were being started. The voice of the down brook mix in the singing voice that comes from radio, and it was becoming a nice melody with incorporation of voice of crickets. When evening was turning into night, with the effects of cool wind that comes from brook or with the end of the gas of pressure lamp, camellia joy was being ended.

Radio was the most reputable belonging of homes. It had the seat of honor. Absolutely, there was a handicraft cover on it. In the beginning, we had a radio with an enormous batter. I can remember

radio's battery but not its shape. Later on, we had a front buttoned, battery-operated "Sierra" brand radio. There was Ankara Radio, a Turkish broadcast radio, among many stations that make broadcast in Russian. Its sound was so weak and powerless comparing with other stations. There was The Voice of America Radio that makes Turkish broadcast in particular hours of day, through shortwave. News hours were important. So to speak, the flow of day was being arranged according to news hours. Before it started, people were sitting right next to radio, and it was being listened carefully until it ended. There was not any other way to have communication with the rest of world in this hid end of creation.

Life Journal was coming once in a month. I knew world leaders, important people, Yeşilcam and Hollywood artists. Radio and Life Journal were far away from audial and visual technology of our day but they became an unchangeable part and architect of my memories.

While darkness was falling in our side in the evenings, electric power light on at the other side, its light was blinding us, its flash was lighting our walls. While we were sitting at the light of gas lamp, sometimes a spotlight was scanning our homes, it was coming into our rooms from windows, everywhere was getting light for a few seconds, than it was falling into darkness again.

Music broadcast was being made from the other side in day times. Mostly, a bass man voice was singing songs that never like ours, in a language that I do not understand.

I had a significant curiosity about opposite side. We were living at two shores of one river, but they were different. They had electricity and bright lights that enlighten night. They had strong voices that suppressed our radios, they had songs that I could not

understand. With this curiosity, sometimes I was going to shore, I was watching the opposite shore among trees by having afraid a little bit. Sometimes, I went up to minaret, I was trying to see people with fixed binoculars. Mostly, people were not seen around. Sometimes, I was catching a shadow, and lose it, until I make clearness adjustment.

Opposite side was mysterious for me.

As it was required by my father's duty, from time to time, meeting were being done with Russians. Committees of both sides were gathering in protocol building at border, sometimes, they were doing some works that take around a few days, at land for determination of border. My father was chairman of Turkish side, and a Georgian, Kabidze was chairman of Russian side. Because İskender Granddad exist as translator in committee, this meetings were being mentioned a lot at home conversations. I was the most curious listener of this conversations.

A summer day, when my father said that he will take me to one of this meetings, I was so happy and excited. Finally, I will be able to satisfy my curiosity. Maybe, it was my first dream that came true, my first discover, my first passing borders, my first meeting with people who have different language and religion. I could not sleep at that night. In the morning, my mother put my clothes on me. We met with the other members of committee in township building. I think we were around for or five. We went to protocol building at the border. Protocol building was a one floor white building among exuberant chestnuts at the side of the river. There was a brook a little away from building where a wooden bridge existed. The other side of bridge was Russian land. There was one of our soldiers who was on watch. Meeting was going to make at Russian side. When we arrived bridge with the company of protocol officer, soldier made a formal salute. No one was seen at the other end of bridge. When we walked up to middle of bridge, a Russian soldier showed up among trees in opposite side and started to approach us. I was so excited, I think I was a little afraid too. I remember, I get closer to my father and hold his hand. It was very important moment for me, first time I was seeing a foreigner. Besides, this person was a man who had bright lights, projectors, grand bass voices.

By approaching, I was trying to see how he looks like. Actually, he was not different from us. He was a little tall, a little brighter skin than ours, blue eyes, and golden hair. When he arrived, he saluted us. They spoke in a language that I do not understand with İskender Granddad. His voice was not bass or grand, it was just like ours. He take forward, we followed him. Along with shore, we walked for a while on a narrow road among trees. When we arrived a small square, four or five Russian with uniforms, stand up from camellia and walked toward us. The older one among them, handshaked with my father with a significant warm and smile. My father turned to me and said "This is Kabidze!". The man stooped and tweaked my cheek and fondled my hair. I remember that my spindle shanks were shaking. The one who I overrated, touched me, it was my first contact with someone who is not one of

us. We sat on camellia, meeting was started with the translatorsip of İskender Grandpa. Even they are talking in different languages, my father and Kabidze were like two old friend. I do not remember what was talked, what was eaten. I was in different feelings. I was discovering a different world than mine, I was among people who I watched within a curiosity and I tried to see by using binoculars.

When formal meetings were ended, cigarettes were smoked. I think, ours were smoking Bafra cigarette. There were a name on theirs that its most letters were written reverse. There was a conversation between my father and Kabidze with translatorsip of İskender Granddad. The things that were spoken in a part of conversation, significantly attracted my attention. I do not know how they ended there, in a moment, my father said to Kabidze "Even we have different prophets, we have the same God". Kabidze said something. İskender Granddad said to my father "He says he does not believe in God". Kabidze were keep talking: "I believe nothing I do not see, if there was a God, Yuri Gagarin would have seen him when he went to space". I could not believe my ears, did I hear wrong, what was this Russian telling? Was it true? Who was Yuri Gagarin or what? Did he go to space? How and when? (Figure-4).



Figure-4. The first cosmonot Yuri Gagarin

It was the most extraordinary thing that I heard up to that moment in my very short life. As soon as we turn back to Maradit, I asked my father whether it was true. It was. Two years ago, a

Russian man named Yuri Gagarin went to space and came back. What I heard, was unbelievable for someone who born in Veliköy of Şavşat and maintains his life in uttermost point, Maradit but it was real. While I was still trying to discover opposite shore, they discovered the space.

Meeting with Yuri Gagarin, was affected me more than any other excitement that I lived at that day.

At that day, my little tiny world extended as much as much reaching the space.

This time, I lived a similar excitement in Şavşat in 1968. We were again by radio, we were witnessing the first step of human being on Moon from the intermittent weak voice of Voice of America Radio. The trip starting from Cape Canaveral of Neil Armstrong and his companies and their arriving to Moon, was one of the most important events of the history of humankind.

After many years, in America, I went the place where this trip started. I walked around space station. I turned back to my childhood, to Maradit, in control center of the first travel to Moon, I remembered Kahidze and Gagarin again.

I again lived my childhood this time in America in Dallas. I again turned to my childhood, to Maradit, when I came to crossroads of Houston and Elm streets where Kennedy assassination was realized. It was November, 1963. Leaves of apple tree turned pale in tea garden that was seen from the window of our home, it was a lovely autumn day. I remembered my father by radio. He was listening Voice of America Radio carefully. The news was very important. President Kennedy was shoot in Dallas. I knew handsome President of America and his Beautiful Wife from The Life Journal. My father found that journal and we get upset again by looking at photos. After many years, I again lived that moment on where Kennedy was shot. (Figure-5).



Figure-5. a) John Kennedy, Democrat President of U.S.A who was assassinated **b)** He is with his wife, a little before he was shot.

35 years later, I went to Maradit again. I had a great wish to see again where my childhood passed, the place that the very first memories of my life had been through. On the other hand, I was afraid. Everything could have been changed. Maradit could took its credit from the destruction that we had done in everywhere for sake of urbanization. But it was not. Actually there was not much things changed. School, police station, square, they were standing where they were before. There were a few new buildings. After I parked my car at the square, I walked to the front of my school. I stand there for a while just to watch. When the things that I saw, reached my brain, memories in my mind refreshed again.

May, 1963, it was the last day of school. I was going to

school every day with my elder sister, at the end of the season, I was able to read and write. When the report card day arrived, as every children, I also was so excited. Everyone took their report cards, but me. Because I was six and I was not registered in school. Running and crying, I came home. Consolation of my mother could not stop my hiccups. Şerafet (Yazar) Teacher was our neighbor. She said "May report card was forgotten, and it will be given tomorrow, I remember I slept on her lap. Next day, when Şerife teacher brought my report card, I was so happy. But this situation, did not abolish obligation of going to first degree in new education year for me.

By passing police station, along with walkway, I walked up to our house. It was standing right there. I passed the wooden door,

entered into garden. It had not surrendered to years, but it was tired, exhausted, its plasters peeled off, partly, bricks came off. It was quiet. There were not İskender Granddad, Ayşe Grandmamma. Its railing wooden lowered, I would have thought that it was left, if I did not see laundries that were hanged on balcony and hazelnuts that were down on the garden.

By passing among hazelnut gardens, I came down to shore of river. Çoruh was again streaming murky. I sat down under a tree, and looked the opposite shore. There was not much change seemingly. Actually many things changed. The super state of my childhood which concurred the space, had fell apart, new states were established. Opposite shores was Georgia anymore.

I do not know whether Maradit (Muratlı) will stay like that in future? Or will human kind destroy here for sake of civilization? What is going to happen to our memories, our past? Our homes that we were born ad grown, school that we

had education, streets where we played games, gardens. What will happen to our children that we keep alive in us with our memories? Will we able to sit by the shore of a dam lake, will we be able to see our past that gradually becoming dark under the bright lights? When we cannot see what is belong to us, what will happen to our sense of belonging that we feel for this land? While our past is sinking under the water, will our bright lights be able to enlighten our future? I do not know (Figure-6) ⁽⁵⁾.

Prof. Dr. Necdet Şükrü Altun
March-2004. Ankara

(Note for reader: Maradit; is the old name of Muratlı town which in belong to Borçka district of Artvin. Çoruh River leaves our border after making a short border between Turkey and Georgia.)

For sake of his father's duty, he completed his primary education in Artvin Gazi Primary School after he took every class in different places (Figure-7).



Figure-6. Muratlı Dem, it operates for two years from now on, and it was located close to town. The photo below, was taken in Karşıköy which is now under the Muratlı Dem water.



Figure-7. Primary School 3. Grade, April 23, National Sovereignty and Children's Day Ceremony. Doğruyol Township, Çıldır, Kars, 1965.

He completed Artvin Secondary School and Artvin Kazım Karabekir High School. In 1974, he moved to Ankara with his family. In 1975, he started his education in Ankara University Faculty of Medicine. It was also a beginning of new life for Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun. He moved to metropolis, the capital city, by leaving his relatives, friends and memories⁹.

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun was a university student in a political and social turmoil period of country. At that period, universities divided into two parts as rightist and leftist. It was unlikely possible to be just a student by not involving one of this groups. As a young man who does not have friends and came from rural area, in the beginning, he had significant difficulties about keep following his education by not involving this

groups, in the beginning. By the time, he get oriented that environment and made very good friendships (Figure-8).

Kamil İmamoğlu was one of his lecturers who affected him a lot, in faculty of medicine. He loved surgery thanks to him. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun decided that "I should be a surgeon if I am going to be a doctor". Another one lecturer who guided him, was Rıdvan Ege, so to speak, Lecturer Rıdvan made a magical touch to his life. Rıdvan lecturer is the one who was the reason of being academican orthopaedist for Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun. With his own words "He learned from him not only orthopaedics but also how to be a good medical doctor and a good person". The statement of Rıdvan lecturer- "The one who has not benefit for others, is not a good human". - always became a guide for him⁹.



Figure-8. a) Ankara University Faculty of Medicine, first grade, chemistry laboratory. From the left Dr. Nihat Akçayöz-ENT, Dr. Levent Bozbeyoğlu –Orthopedics, Dr. Ünal Coşar-Radiology and Necdet Şükrü Altun, 1975. **b)** Exactly 40 years later, we renewed this photograph with same friends.

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun graduated from Faculty of Medicine in July, 1981. For one year, he worked in Social Insurance Institution (SSK) Ulus Hospital as practitioner. This was a period when he improved his general medicine knowledge and handicrafts.

At the same year, he married with Seher Altun that they met one year ago in English course and who is having her senior year education in Gazi University, Faculty of Vocational Education.

In October 1982, he started to work as research assistant in Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology. In 1982, head of department was Prof. Dr. Orhan Aslanoğlu. Prof. Dr. Orhan Aslanoğlu was a valuable lecturer who graduated from Galatasaray University, made his orthopaedics speciality with famous French Judets brothers, and established Osteopathic Hospital in Eğirdir. Other lecturers of him were Assoc. Prof. Dr. İnanç Ayaz and Assoc. Prof. Özcan Kaymak. One year later, Prof. Dr. Rıdvan Ege came to Gazi University with assignment and became

Head of Department. In Wednesday councils that were done with the leadership of lecturer Rıdvan, highly valuable lecturers were attending as guest. Prof. Dr. Rıdvan Ege was asking opinions of everyone by beginning from the lowest junior research assistant. This councils were very important school for assistants. Prof. Altun said that he learned a lot of things in this councils for both occupational and human relations (Figure 9)°.



Figure-9. After a Wednesday Council, with my lecturers, and assistant friends, 1984.

His daughter Merve was born in April 1985.

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun became specialist in May, 1987. In June, he started his military service. At that time, medical officer cadet school was within Armored Forces School in Etimesgut. He had education with tanker reserve officer students. After education, he serves as orthopedist in Girne Military Hospital.

In 1988 November, he started his mandatory service in Trabzon Yavuz Sultan Selim Osteopathic and Rehabilitation Hospital. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun told me that head physician of hospital was Orthopedics and Traumatology Specialist Numan Gül at that time. Numan Gül was a well-loved physician in Trabzon. They worked together for one year. Unfortunately, he passed away in a traffic accident in his early ages. After years, one day when Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun was head of department, a young doctor came to his room. He introduced himself as Orkun Gül. Orkun Gül was awarded to start his duty in Gazi University Faculty of Medicine Hospital, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology where Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun was started to work as research assistant and became head of department. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun said to him “do you know anyone name Numan Gül, you look alike him a lot”, he received the answer “I am his son”. This moment became a memory which he can never forget in his life. The son of man who he worked together many years ago, became his student°.

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun opened his first clinic in Trabzon. In the beginning, he did not have such intent but after a pharmacy that he knew there, saying “according to people who live here, doctors who do not have clinic, are not acceptable”, he had to open his clinic. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun became a well-known and demanded doctor in Trabzon in a very short time. In one year that he worked in Trabzon, he earned significant experience⁹.

In 1989 autumn, he turned back to capital city by assigning to Dr. Muhittin Ülker Emergency and Traumatology Hospital. His clinic chief was Op. Dr. Savaş Ağaoğlu at that time. He was together with his classmates; Dr. Raşit Cesur and Dr. Levent Bozbeyoğlu. It was the most enjoyable period of his occupational life.

One year later, he turned back to Gazi University Faculty of Medicine Hospital, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology as assistant professor. In his passing to academic staff, Rıdvan Ege lecturer and our valuable lecturer İnanç Ayaz that we lost in his early ages, had big contribution.

He became assistant professor in 1994 and professor in 2000. For a period of time, he was Head of Department of Surgery Sciences and head physician of Gazi Hospital.

He went great guns both in Head of Department and Head of Department of Surgical Sciences an also in his Head Physician period. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun who retired in 2014 March with his own will, is keep doing his occupation in private health sector from that date⁹.

HIS PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE:

According to Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun to keep mental health and motive on occupation for a physician, dealing with some works other than medicine, is very useful and also it is a necessity. One of this ways is art. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun's choice is photograph art.

Meeting with photography happened because of his occupational needs. There is no doubt that, documentation in medicine is very important. Especially in spinal surgery, obtaining roentgen and clinical images and archiving them, are required. And also presenting and sharing them in meetings and congresses, are essential. For them all, in time, we all get professional help and spend a lot of money just like Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun. Especially, slide technic which is old-fashioned now, is highly costly work. I would like to express this process with his own words⁹:

This issue actually will have a short history of screening and presentation technique. Words that will take place in slide, firstly, is being written on a white paper with typewriter. Than it will be taken to slide movie with photograph machine. If it is published as negative, ground will be black and words will be white. With the roentgen photographs that were put between them,

presentation would have been prepared. This processes, were being done in Education Center with Radio and Film which belongs to Ministry of Public Education which is located right opposite of Gazi Hospital, and which was located on Konya road. There were photograph masters who work in photograph studio. Hüseyin Tanboğa who is one of them, had a great effort on me. Later on, by using a special chemical, the black ground was turned into blue. It was out of the ordinary, and my first presentations which I did with this way, had a great effect. When I saw this, I thought to prepare a completely colored presentation. I prepared a DKÇ presentation. Yet, computer monitors were black and white. I printed words from IBM printer as negative, it means white words on black grounds. Then, I painted this words with colored pens. After I cut words in strip shape, by scanning different journals, I adhered colored child photos by using as background. Then, Hüseyin Tanboğa took colored slides of this pictures. The result was perfect in conditions of that day, it was the first presentation with this way. After presentation, I took many praises not about the context of the subject but about my presentation technic, I had to buy this technic for a long time of period. It was high in terms of cost but occupational acquisitions was very significant. After this experience, I thought that I should do this work by my own. I needed a professional photograph machine.

By paying a very high price according to my salary, I bought a Nikon 4004S when I was in abroad for a course. I had to learn photograph technics. We established photograph club in faculty with students. We had training from very valuable photograph masters. I became a member of Photograph Art Institution that was established in Ankara. Here, again I had trainings from very valuable photograph artist of our country, I attended studio works. I made presentations in photograph exhibitions and different institutions and foundations.

Photograph is the only way to stop the time. Photograph means is sharing. No one takes photographs just for see by his/herself. Photographers want to share, human being who shares his/her effort and art, is a good person. That's why, photographers are good people. Photographer can see and show details that no one can see or be aware of, by framing life, environment, people and society in a different way from others, just like a microscope. This mean is actually seeing more, living more and enjoying more, this mean is being happy. As a physician who deal with spinal surgery, the meaning of photograph is staying away from the stress a little bit, staying by myself, seeing different places, and different people and knowing different lives. I need it to protect my mental health⁶ (Figure-10)”

HIS CONTRIBUTION TO SPINAL SURGERY:

The most important thing that impressed him in his spinal surgery career is that many people who educated, guided and trained him, had medicine education in a faculty where spinal surgery is being practiced and its education is being given in Turkey.



Figure-10. Photography works for Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun; **a)** Fog, **b)** The distant village, **c)** Jades, **d)** Child

His lecturers Rıdvan Ege, Güngör Sami Çakırgül and Zeki Korkusuz are important persons both in Turkish orthopedics and spinal surgery. It means, basically he was educated in Ankara Medicine ecole.

In Gazi University where he did his speciality, there was not academic member who deals with spinal surgery. The very first orthopedics surgery was done by Prof. Dr. Zeki Korkusuz with the invitation of lecturer Rıdvan. His assistant was Prof. Dr. Tarık Yazar. In a fracture event, Harrington instrumentation was practiced⁹.

He entered his first orthopedics surgery in Eğırdır Osteopathic Hospital with late Op. Dr. Savaş Ağaoğlu. It was an anterior debridement and fusion intervention because of Mal de Pott. He assisted Savaş Ağaoğlu in many spinal attempt during his time in Eğırdır. With his own saying: *“Dr. Ağaoğlu is one of the best surgeons that I knew. Later on, he became our clinic chief in Emergency and Traumatology Hospital. I learned a lot from him. I gratefully memorialize him”*⁹.

When he started to work as assistant professor, late Prof. Dr. İnanç Ayaz, said to him to choose either spinal surgery or orthopaedics oncology, he never hesitate to choose spinal surgery. At that days, in fractures, internal fixators (Dick) method was trend practice. They practiced that to a few patients with Özcan Kaymak. But, Prof. Necdet Altun was thinking about deformity surgeries and he wanted to learn and practice Cotrel-Dubousset instrumentation. In this subject, Op. Dr. Ömer Çeliker who was working in SSK

Dışkapı Hospital, was the one who had the most cases in our country at that time. He watched him in a presentation and being impressed a lot. But, Dr. Çeliker passed away too early. I memorialize him with thankfulness and mercy.

He had gave appointment to one of his patient with scoliosis for CD practicing, but he lived through a problem related to marketing of system in our country, and Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun could not be able to realize the operation. At that exact time, a friend of him who was marketing orthopaedics products, showed him brochures of a TSRH system which was similar to CD system and which was started to practice in America. To learn the practice, Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun and I, found a chance to go to Dallas, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital where the system was developed and practiced. We learned highly valuable information about either practicing of system, or evaluation of patients with spine problem, or clinical approaches, indications and treatment options from Clinic Chief Dr. John Herring. TSRH is a very important mile stone in the spinal surgery career of Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun. Later on, Herring and his team, came to our country with our invitation, they made conferences both in Gazi Ortopedics Days and Turkish Spine Congress⁹ (Figure-11)

After he came back, he found many chances to practice TSRH, and he published its results^{1-3,10}. Later on, he found a chance to meet with Dr. Marc Asher, the lecturer of ISOLA instrumentation, he went to Kansas city of United States of America to learn ISOLA system which is a modern version of Luque System⁹ (Figure-12).

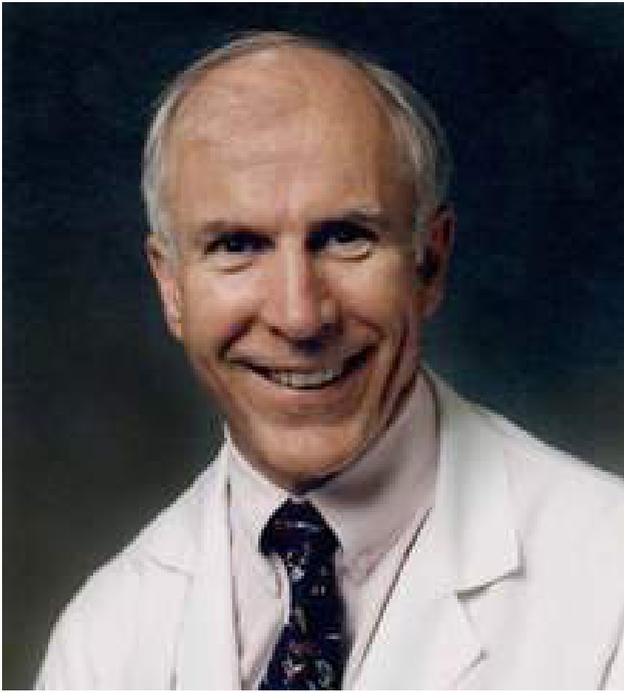


Figure-11. Prof. John Herring, M.D.

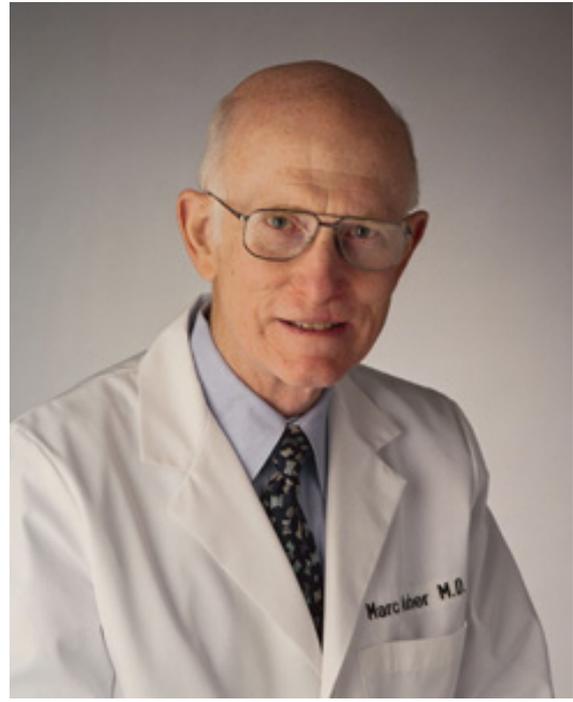


Figure-12. Prof. Marc Asher, M.D.

He get education about practicing of system and deformity surgery approach from Marc Asher, the creator of system. After he came back from Kansas with an important experience, he practiced ISOLA instrumentation successfully for many patients. In the department, he educated young friends about this modern system⁹.

Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun who had an important experience about Posterior attempts, received an invitation from Werner Wicker Clinic which Zielke is its founder from German ecole, to have experience in anterior attempt-thanks to personal friendship of Lecturer Rıdvan Ege with Zielke-. Werner Wicker clinic was an important center in spinal surgery and its team was maintaining ecole although Zielke retired. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun saying that three spinal surgery were realizing in center⁹. According to him, Dr. Metz and his team, were working in a machine order: *“Dr. Metz was one of the most talented surgeons that I knew. I saw there what can a surgeon do in spinal surgery, how extended limits they can have. Germany experience significantly affected my vision about spinal surgery. I can say that, it aged me and raised my self-confidence and encouraged me as a surgeon.”*

He always was proud of having mission in some subjects and organizations about spinal surgery. As I mentioned in introduction, for a period of time, he was a board member of Turkish Spinal Association. In that period, he published his book *“Degenerative Spinal Diseases”* that he was editor

with Tarık Yazar. We, together, were assistant of Prof. Dr. Emin Alıcı who was founder and editor of *The Journal Of Turkish Spinal Surgery-JTSS* which was media organ of our association for a long time. He performed co-chairman duty of X. International Turkish Spine Congress in Nevşehir. Even though Brain Surgeons protested congress at that time, he realized congress successfully with the highest attendance and highest scientific context. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun knew separation of scientific activities from personal interest as he always do, he demonstrated importance of be principled on the way of looking true but also be decent to all Turkish Spine family⁹.

Since 2005, he is performing spinal surgery with Prof. Dr. Ali Şehirliođlu who is one the most important names that Turkish Spinal Surgery raised. With the team that was created by attendance of, in the beginning Prof. Dr. Serdar Kahraman after him, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Halil İbrahim Seçer from brain surgery, two orthopaedist and two physiotherapist, he is keep working on spinal surgery. Last a few months before, he started directorate of LÖSANTE Hospital that The Foundation for Children with Leukemia established in Ankara. Prof. Dr. Necdet Altun who always saves his calmness, adopted modesty and honesty as principle, my elder brother who spreads his life energy, is not only one of the frontiers of Turkish Spinal Surgery but also one of the main posts. I wish healthy and many successful years for him.



Figure-13. Prof. Necdet Altun, with his students.

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