REVIEW

The Most Influential Scientist in the Development of Medical informatics (14): Branko Cesnik

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BRANKO CESNIK (1956–2007)

Branko Cesnik (1956–2007) earned MBBS in 1978 and MD in 1995. He was an Australian pioneer and an international leader in Health Informatics (1–4). Branko graduated as a doctor from Monash University. Following his graduation he worked in training posts in accident and emergency medicine and renal medicine in Australia before spending time working in South Africa. In 1988 Branko was appointed as a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Community Medicine and General Practice at Monash University. Under the visionary leadership of Professor Neil Carson AO, Branko went on to establish the first research and education unit for Medical informatics in any of the medical school in Australia. Branko's research focused on innovative ways to use information technology to support medical education and clinical care. Branko's work in medical education innovation received the Monash University Silver Jubilee Teaching Prize in 1993. In 1995 Branko was appointed as Associate Professor at Monash University and later Branko and Wendy and the members of their unit accepted an invitation to become part of the new Monash Institute for Health Services Research, established by the late Professor Chris Silagy AO. At the institute Branko continued his research activity on the establishment of successful postgraduate training programs for health professionals in health informatics. His vision for the use of IT in health care preceded the widespread development of the World Wide Web and the hypermedia applications which were to appear in the mid-1990s. Branko fostering the development of health informatics especially in Australia and the Asia Pacific Region. In 1991 Branko was one of the founders of the Health Informatics Society of Australia. Since its establishment the Society has held an annual health informatics conference which has been instrumental in raising the profile of health informatics and facilitating the development of this discipline in Australia. In 1994 Branko co-founded the Asia-Pacific Association for Medical Informatics becoming its second President from 1997–2000. In 1997 he was responsible for bringing the second conference of the Asia Pacific Association for Medical Informatics to Australia. In 1999 Branko became a foundation Fellow of the Australian College of Health Informatics. Branko was the second

President of the Australian College of Health Informatics from 2001–2003. In 2001 Branko was elected as Vice-President of IMIA, a mark of the level of respect that he engendered among his peers at an international level. His work helped to ensure that the 2007 conference of the MEDINFO, in Brisbane. He was involved especially in supporting the evaluation of health computing in Australian general practice. In recent years Branko also worked for Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council as a member of the Health Advisory Committee and as Chair of the Information Management Framework Committee. Branko was also appointed by the Australian Health Ministers Council as a member of the National Health Information Group, which is leading the development of electronic health records in each state and territory. Branko, also, worked as a clinician in the Emergency Department of the Knox Private Hospital in Wantirna for many years. In August 2005 Branko's leadership and life work was honored with the award of Life Membership of the Health Informatics Society of Australia, and Life Membership of the IMIA. These are rarely bestowed honors and they reflect the esteem of Branko's peers in Australia and around the world.

• Conflict of interest: none declared.

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