

Loss of a Pioneer: Hussein Abdel-Dayem, MD 1934-2017



Dr. Hussein M. Abdel-Dayem, MD, a pioneer and international leader in the field of nuclear medicine, died on March 12, 2017. In him, the nuclear medicine and molecular imaging community lost a brilliant physician-scientist, an inspiring educator, and a devoted mentor.

Born in Cairo, Egypt in 1934, Dr. Abdel-Dayem graduated from Cairo University's Kasr El-Aini Medical School in 1959 and completed his training in Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiology in 1967. After serving on the Faculty of Medicine at Cairo University, Dr. Abdel-Dayem immigrated to Buffalo, NY, where he worked with Dr. Merrill Bender and Dr. Monte Blau at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. He was among the first recipients of the American Board of Nuclear Medicine in 1972 and was also certified by the American Board of Radiotherapy. He later became Chief of Nuclear Medicine at Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo, where he remained until 1981. He then moved to Kuwait to serve as Chair of the Department of Nuclear Medicine at Kuwait University and Chief of Nuclear Medicine Services for the Ministry of Public Health.

During his time in Kuwait, Dr. Abdel-Dayem established nuclear medicine services at multiple hospitals and developed the first nuclear medicine residency and technologist training programs in the Middle East. Under his stewardship, his department published over one hundred peer reviewed journal articles in a wide variety of areas including oncology, cardiology, instrumentation, and neuroscience. He raised the profile of nuclear medicine in the Middle East and garnered international recognition as a leader and innovator in the field.

In 1990, Dr. Abdel-Dayem returned to the United States and worked at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as Associate Chief of Nuclear Medicine before accepting a position as Chief of Nuclear Medicine at Saint Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center of New York and Professor of Radiology at New York Medical College. He remained there until his retirement in 2010.

Over his prolific 50 year career, Dr. Abdel-Dayem published hundreds of journal articles and trained scores of residents and fellows in nuclear medicine and radiology from around the world. He served in numerous leadership positions, including President of the Asia and Oceania Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology (1988-1992), and President of the American College of Nuclear Medicine (2007-2008). He was also an advisor to the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1984 to 2000. A masterful communicator, he lectured around the world, always emphasizing the multicultural and international nature of the nuclear medicine community. He was a reviewer not only for multiple American journals such as the Journal of Nuclear Medicine, Radiology, and Cancer but also for numerous international journals. He was always generous with his time and resources throughout his career and well into his retirement, offering advice and help to all who asked. Toward the end of his career, he worked tirelessly for the Children's Cancer Hospital in Egypt which provides free treatment to some of Egypt's sickest children.

Despite all of his academic and professional success, Dr. Abdel-Dayem will be remembered most for his quick wit and a keen sense of humor. He was a charismatic leader, a compassionate healer, and a caring mentor. Dr. Walid Omar of the Children's Cancer Hospital in Egypt said, "He was like a candle that lit the path for everyone around him." He had an undying love of people, and that is why he was loved by all who were fortunate enough to have known him. Hussein is survived by Ayda, his loving wife of 49 years, his daughter Amani, his son Essmaeel, and six beautiful grandchildren who miss him dearly.

**Essmaeel Abdel-Dayem, David Collier¹,
Abdelhamid Elgazzar², Steven Larson³,
Leonard Freeman⁴, Abbas Alavi⁵,
Waleed Omar⁶, Habib Zaidi⁷**

Department of Radiology, South Shore Hospital,
 South Weymouth, MA, ¹Milwaukee,
 Wisconsin, USA, ²Department of Nuclear Medicine,
 Kuwait University, Kuwait City, Kuwait,
³Department of Radiology, Memorial Sloan-Kettering
 Cancer Center, ⁴Department of Radiology,
 Albert Einstein College of Medicine,
 New York, NY, ⁵Department of Radiology,
 Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania,
 Philadelphia, PA, USA,
⁶Department of Nuclear Medicine,
 Children's Cancer Hospital, Cairo, Egypt,
⁷Division of Nuclear Medicine, University Hospital,
 Geneva, Switzerland.
 E-mail: aelgazzar49@hotmail.com

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