

Editorial



In Commemoration of Professor Mohammad Taghikhani: Pioneer of Clinical Biochemistry in Iran

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Article info:

Received: 20 February 2025

Revised: 1 March 2025

Accepted: 4 March 2025

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Professor Mohammad Taghikhani, eminent professor of Clinical Biochemistry of Tarbiat Modares University, was born on October 29, 1949 in the city of Qazvin and passed away on Monday, April 10, 2018, in Tehran at the age of 69. Professor Taghikhani completed his education at Dar Al-Fonun High School and graduated in 1967. He then continued his education at the University of Tehran and received a bachelor degree in Laboratory Sciences in 1972. Professor Taghikhani went to the United States to continue his education and received his master's degree in Clinical Biochemistry from Morgan University and his doctorate from the University of Miami in 1982. He also completed a fellowship in blood and hormones at Ohio University (Figs 1 and 2). Upon his return to Iran, Prof. Taghikhani played a pivotal role in advancing higher education, particularly at the postgraduate level. In 1983, he was appointed as the first faculty member of the Department of Clinical Biochemistry at Tarbiat Modares University. Over the following four decades, he remained actively engaged in various scientific, executive, and policymaking roles within the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology leaving a lasting impact through his numerous contributions. His notable positions included:

- Vice President for Education, Tarbiat Modares University (1983–1985)
- Vice President for Education, University of Tehran (1985–1992)
- Dean of the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics (IBB)- University of Tehran (1994-1996)
- President of Imam Khomeini International University (1992–1994)
- Vice President for Education, Shahed University (1995–1997)
- President of the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (1997–2000)
- President of the Pasteur Institute of Iran (2000–2005)
- Advisor to the President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (2013–2015)
- Advisor to the Minister of Science, Research, and Technology (2015–2017)
- Member of the Iran-China Friendship Association (1997–2018)
- President of the Iranian Society of Biochemistry (1993–2015)
- Chair and Member of the National Board of Examiners of Clinical

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Citation: Meshkani R, Golestani A. In Commemoration of Professor Mohammad Taghikhani: Pioneer of Clinical Biochemistry in Iran. *Acta Biochimica Iranica*. 2025;3(1):1-5.

 <https://doi.org/10.18502/abi.v3i1.19344>



Biochemistry (from inception until 2018)

- President of the Sports Medicine Federation (2015-2016)
- Served three terms as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Tarbiat Modares University
- Served as a member of the Board of Trustees of five universities

Professor Taghikhani served three non-consecutive terms as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Tarbiat Modares University, where he was among the founding faculty members of the Clinical Biochemistry Department. He played a very important role in the development and promotion of the field of Clinical Biochemistry at Tarbiat Modares University and also at the national level. Appointed as the first faculty member of the school in 1983, he established the fundamental educational and research infrastructure of the School of Medicine and played an important role in shaping its scientific path. Under his leadership, the faculty's educational programs were restructured and improved. His dedication to postgraduate education significantly contributed to the training of outstanding students and researchers across various disciplines in medical sciences.

Between 1985 and 1992, Prof. Taghikhani served as Vice President for Education at the University of Tehran. During his tenure, he focused on curriculum reform and educational restructuring. His efforts were mainly focused on improving the quality of education, expanding graduate programs, and increasing student enrollment in master's and doctoral programs.

From 1993 to 1994, he was appointed President of Imam Khomeini International University in Qazvin. With a transformative academic and managerial approach, he initiated substantial developments to elevate the university's status. Notably, he revived construction projects and introduced 14 new academic programs at various levels. The university also admitted 350 international students during this period, contributing to its emergence as a prominent institution of higher education.

From the founding of the Clinical Biochemistry Board until 2018, Prof. Taghikhani served as both a member and chair of the National Board of Examiners of the discipline. He was a pioneer and also the founder of the curriculum for the postgraduate program in Clinical Biochemistry in Iran. He played a central role in the advancement of postgraduate education and assessment



Figure 1. Professor Mohammad Taghikhani over time



Figure 2. Prof. Taghikhani during his studies at Ohio University



Figure 3. Prof. Taghikhani in a meeting at the Pasteur Institute of Iran

in Clinical Biochemistry. During his tenure, systematic assessments of medical universities across the country were conducted to evaluate and improve the quality of master's and doctoral programs in Clinical Biochemistry. He strongly advocated for the presence of trained Clinical Biochemists in clinical laboratories, asserting that specialized laboratory management by experts would enhance diagnostic accuracy and therapeutic outcomes. Prof. Taghikhani was also one of the professors who played a significant role in pursuing the revival of the Clinical Laboratory Sciences Fellowship. Furthermore, he played an important and influential role in the development of the field of laboratory sciences, especially the doctoral program in laboratory sciences.

During his presidency at the Pasteur Institute of Iran (2000–2005), the institution underwent significant scientific, managerial, and international transformations (Fig 3). He elevated the international standing of the institute by hosting the Global Assembly of Pasteur Institute Directors in Tehran. His tenure focused on the expansion of research infrastructure, modernization of laboratories, and the advancement of bioscience research.

As one of the founding members of the Iranian Society of Biochemistry after the 1979 revolution, Prof. Taghikhani served as its president for 22 years. His long-term leadership in this society reflects the scientific community's deep trust in his knowledge, experience, and insight. Under his guidance, the society grew from a small organization into a dynamic and influential body. He also laid the foundations for the sustainable development of biochemistry in Iran by continuously holding national and international congresses on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (Fig. 4). In this regard, one of his important and influential actions was to honor and celebrate the pioneers of the field of biochemistry, which was carried out during the holding of international congresses on Biochemistry and Molecular

Biology (Fig. 5). After his passing, the Iranian Society of Biochemistry, in order to honor his name and memory, awards the Professor Mohammad Taghikhani Award to outstanding young researchers during the International Congresses of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (Fig. 6).

Beyond his administrative roles, Prof. Taghikhani was a compassionate and ethical professor. His professional ethics, belief in the capabilities of the younger generation, and commitment to academic integrity made him a respected figure among students and colleagues. His connection with students went beyond the academic setting; he was not only a mentor but also a guiding and supportive presence—much like a father. One of his intellectual concerns was the employment of newly graduated students, and in this regard, he did his utmost to help and assist in resolving this issue. Other characteristics of Prof. Taghikhani include his respectful, patient interactions and attention to students, colleagues, and staff at all levels. For those who had the honor of learning under his guidance and working with him, he remains a symbol of genuine love and humanity. His desire to help others stemmed not from duty but from a deep sense of moral and human responsibility, and he never sought personal gain in doing so. Using his effective executive communication, he made every effort to address the concerns of individuals, both in the academic sphere and in the wider social context. His sincere service was a clear sign of commitment to human values and social responsibility, which was constantly reflected in his behavior and personality.

Despite his many executive responsibilities, Professor Taghikhani remained dedicated to research advancements. His main focus of research was on the molecular mechanisms underlying metabolic disorders such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. He trained many master's and doctoral students in Clinical Biochemistry, who played an important role



Figure 4. Prof. Taghikhani's speech during the opening ceremony of the 10th National and 3rd International Congress of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, 2009, Tehran.



Figure 5. Prof. Taghikhani at the ceremony honoring pioneers in the field of biochemistry during the 10th National and 3rd International Congress of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, 2009, Tehran. From left to right, Dr. Mahin Zahraei, Dr. Ali Asghar Moshtaghie, Dr. Mohammad Taghikhani, Dr. Bagher Larigani and Dr. Abolfazl Golestani.



Figure 6. Prof. Taghikhani Award for outstanding young researchers

in advancing the knowledge of Clinical Biochemistry in the country, and some of them became founders of Clinical Biochemistry departments at their universities. He participated in the writing of several books and the translation of a book in the field of Clinical Biochemistry. He also published more than 100 articles in prestigious international journals.

Professor Mohammad Taghikhani passed away on Tuesday, April 9, 2018, in Tehran, after a period of serious illness, at the age of 69. He was laid to rest in the Nam-

Avaran Section of Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery. His loss is deeply felt by his colleagues and students, and until the last days of his life, he remained a dedicated professor and mentor. Furthermore, his profound impact extends far beyond institutional frameworks or academic programs; it lives on in the hearts and minds of hundreds of students, colleagues, and friends. His memory—marked by affection and humility—will forever be a source of inspiration in the Iranian scientific community. May his memory be honored, and may his soul rest in peace.