



## Karim Vessal: A Tribute to a Life in Editorship

Mohammad Reza Namazi<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Shiraz University of Medical Sciences and Dr. Namazi Skin and Hair Clinic, Shiraz, Iran

\*Corresponding author: Shiraz University of Medical Sciences and Dr. Namazi Skin and Hair Clinic, Shiraz, Iran. Email: namazimr@sums.ac.ir

Received 2022 February 28; Accepted 2022 February 28.

**Keywords:** Editorship, Iran, Hurdles, Karim Vessal, Radiology

With great regret, Prof. Karim Vessal passed away at the age of 89 in Shiraz, Iran, on February 19, 2022. He was born in 1993 in Shiraz from a cultured family, being the great-grandson of Vessal Shirazi, one of the prominent Iranian poets and calligraphers that his name is on two streets in Shiraz and Tehran. His father and grandfather were also poets and calligraphers (1).

Karim Vessal earned his MD degree in 1957 from Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany. Then, he did a degree in physics at Berlin School of Science and Philosophy and received board certification in radiology from Berlin University in 1965. After practicing in Germany and UK for a few years, he returned to his hometown and was appointed as the Head of Radiology Department of Shiraz University. He also undertook fellowships at the radiology departments of Johns Hopkins and Vanderbilt Universities, USA (1). He employed the knowledge he gained through education in the prestigious western universities to advance the Radiology Department of Shiraz University and train the next generation of radiologists. He also wrote the first comprehensive Persian book on nuclear medicine (1).

Prof. Vessal was a polyglot, knowing German, English, and French excellently, and was familiar with Latin and Greek, as well (1). In 2014, he collected and published the literary essays and poems of his older brother, Abdul-Wahab Nourani Vessel (1923-1994), who was a poet and a pioneer professor of Literature at Shiraz University (1).

Karim Vessal's primary interest, however, was medical editorship. Being a zealot patriot, he endeavored to wave his country's flag by fostering medical journalism. He repeatedly regretted that Iran constituted 1% of the world's population but produced just 0.1% of the global science production (thankfully, it is now raised to 2%). He founded and served as the Editor-in-Chief of the Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences for two decades, being so dedicated that many people called this journal "Dr. Vessal's Jour-

nal." He also remarkably contributed to establishing two other prestigious journals, Archives of Iranian Medicine and Iranian Journal of Radiology. His help-giving personality made him spend a lot of time helping the authors correctly express themselves and revise their papers to have them published- a task very rarely done by editors.

Editorship of scientific journals is not an easy job in developing countries, as editors face many problems like limited resources, poorly written papers needing time-consuming editing, and being the target of the hard feelings of the authors who do not adhere to scientific professionalism and whose papers are rejected. Like Habibzadeh (2), the former president of the World Association of Medical Editors and the editorial consultant of Lancet, I believe that Prof. Vessal can be considered the "father of Iran's modern medical editing."

Prof. Vessal wisely advised Iranian researchers to focus on solving their country's problems and researching the diseases prevalent in their own area, rather than futilely competing with the fully-equipped, well-financed western institutions in mainstream research. For this purpose, he established the annual "Geographic Medical Congress" in Shiraz that continued for 18 years, focusing on the presentation of research done on local health issues.

He was a recipient of the gold medal of the Iranian Congress of Radiology in 2009 and also the prestigious First Rank National Medal of Science in 2011 (1).

Prof. Vessal was a man with a lot of honesty and integrity, and his care in everything he undertook was terrific. His encouragement and love of the young researchers were exemplary.

By his demise, Iran's medical community has lost one of its most brilliant-minded and helpful members.

"Near, far, wherever you are  
I believe that the heart does go on...  
You are safe in our hearts  
And our hearts will go on and on..."

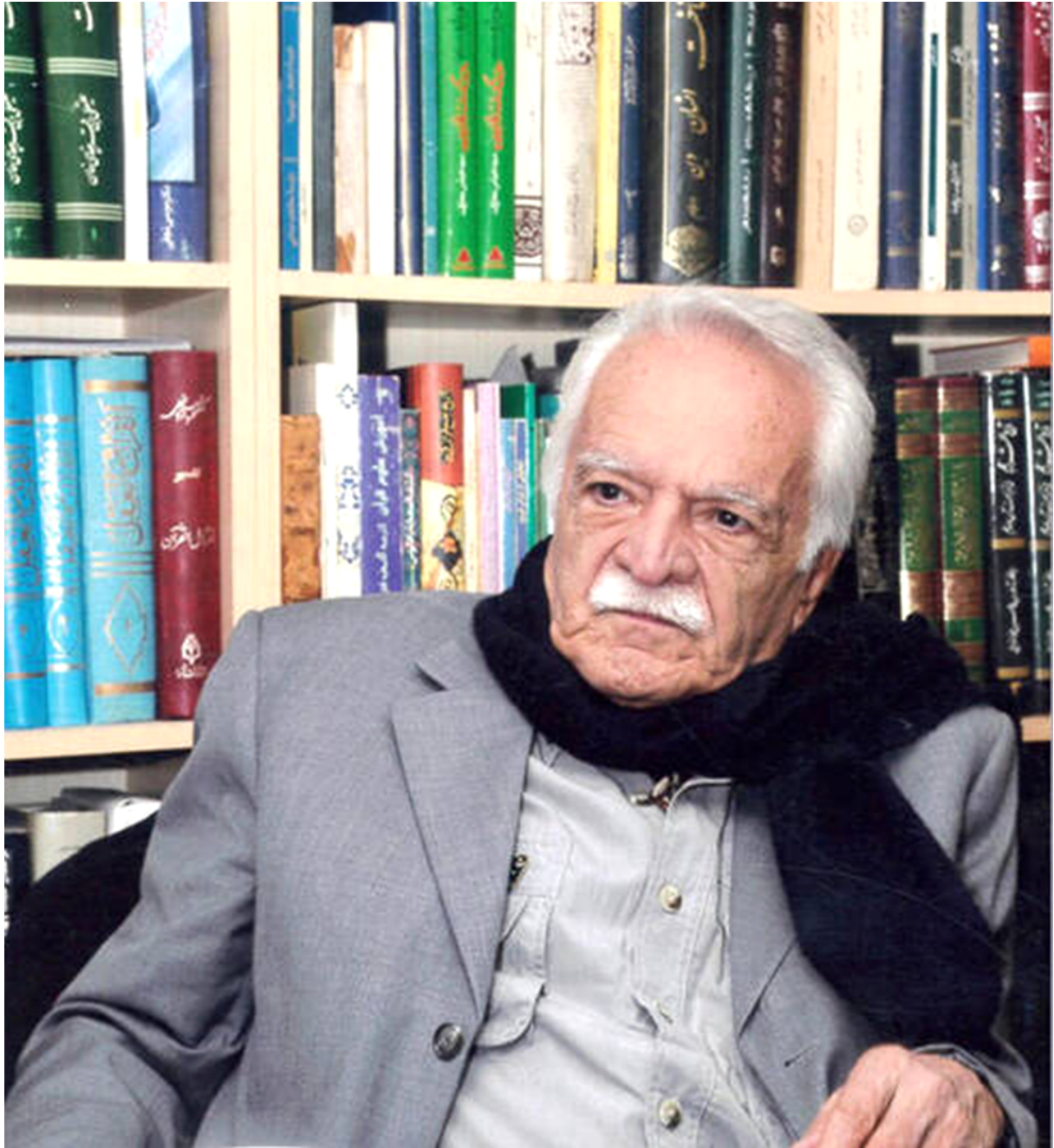


Figure 1. Prof. Karim Vessal

#### Footnote

**Conflict of Interests:** The authors declared no conflict of interest.

#### References

1. Azizi MH, Bahadori M. A look at the life and career of Dr. Karim Vessal: The professor of Shiraz Medical School and a pioneer in medical journalism. *Acta Medica Iranica*. 2018;**56**(11):688-70.
2. Habibzadeh F. Karim Vessal. *Iran J Med Sci*. 2022;**47**(2):79-80. doi: [10.30476/ijms.2022.48189](https://doi.org/10.30476/ijms.2022.48189).