

# The life and work of Borys Horodynskyi: contribution to medical science and education

The article focuses on the life and professional accomplishments of Borys Mykhailovych Horodynskyi (1887—1969), an outstanding Ukrainian surgeon, teacher, and scientist. His path from a student at St. Volodymyr University in Kyiv to a leading specialist in general and military field surgery is highlighted. The article explores the main stages of his career, including his work in Kyiv clinics, participation in World War I, management of the surgical departments at the Second Kyiv Medical Institute, and evacuation to Chelyabinsk during World War II. His contributions to the development and implementation of asepsis and antiseptic procedures, abdominal surgery, and treatment of purulent diseases are particularly noteworthy. The educational endeavours of Borys Horodynskyi, his influence on the formation of a new generation of doctors, as well as the circumstances of his dismissal during the 1953 «doctors' case», are elucidated. We analyse his legacy in Ukrainian medicine, specifically regarding his scientific research, the training of specialists, and the organization of surgical education. The article emphasizes Horodynskyi's significance as a pivotal figure in 20th-century Ukrainian medicine, with his name engraved in the history of national surgery and medical science.



Borys Mykhailovych Horodynskyi was born in 1887 in the city of Haisyn, Podolsk province (today – the city of Haisyn, Vinnytsia region), in the family of an official. He studied at the Nemyriv gymnasium, after which, in 1907, he entered the Medical Faculty of St. Volodymyr University, which he graduated from with honours in 1913 and received the specialty of a doctor.

As a student, he became deeply interested in surgery and worked in the clinic of Professor Dobromyslov, where he wrote his first scientific work.

Between 1913 and 1914, after his successful graduation from the Medical Faculty of St. Volodymyr University, Borys Mykhailovych began to work

under the guidance of Professor M. B. Yukelson who was his teacher and mentor for many years.

In 1914, with the outbreak of World War I, B. M. Horodynskyi was mobilized into the tsarist army, where he served as the senior regimental doctor of the 405th regiment until 1918. After his service, he returned to his «native» hospital, where he worked as an «assistant to the surgical department» from 1918 to 1923. Then he became the head of the surgical department, which he headed until 1934.

Along with knowledge and surgical skills, young Borys acquired meticulousness from his teacher which he demonstrated through various surgical techniques, systematic organization of surgical procedures, and adherence to the principles of clinical documentation.

In 1931, the Kiev Industrial Medical Institute was established on the basis of the First Kyiv Soviet Hospital, which was subsequently transformed into a full-fledged educational medical institution, the Second Kyiv Medical Institute, in 1936. In that year, B. M. Horodynskyi received the titles of Privatdozent at the Kyiv Psychoneurological Institute and Associate Professor in the Department of General Surgery at the Second Kyiv Medical Institute.

In 1934, Borys Mykhailovych was appointed as the Professor of the Department of Propaedeutic Surgery, which he founded himself. In 1936, he received the title of Candidate of Medical Sciences for the entirety of his achievements without defending a candidate dissertation.

B. M. Horodynskyi's principal tenet was, «There is no minor or major in surgery». His practical endeavours mainly involved surgery of the abdominal cavity organs and the management of purulent pathologies affecting soft tissues, bones, and joints. During this period, Borys Mykhailovych cultivated a definitive intolerance to non-compliance with the norms of asepsis and antiseptics. According to his colleagues who worked under his leadership, he required his fellow workers to strictly adhere to the principles of asepsis and antiseptics.

In 1937, the Council of Professors of the Second Kyiv Medical Institute appointed B. M. Horodynskyi as professor and head of the Department of Hospital Surgery, a position he held from 1937 to 1941. He served as the secretary of the Kyiv Surgical Society for many years and was elected deputy chairman of the regional Kyiv Surgical Society in 1937.

A significant milestone in Borys Mykhailovych's life was the year 1941, when World War II reached Ukraine. In August 1941, the Second Kyiv Medical Institute, along with the Kyiv Medical Institute, was evacuated to Kharkiv and subsequently to Chelyabinsk in October 1941. B. M. Horodynskyi was assigned as the head of the Department of General Surgery at the Kyiv United Medical Institute and concurrently served as the chief surgeon for evacuation hospitals in the Chelyabinsk region. Borys Mykhailovych headed the above-mentioned department until 1944.

In Chelyabinsk, B. M. Horodynskyi also ran the surgical department of Chelyabinsk City Hospital No. 1, which became the clinical base for the Kyiv United Medical Institute during its evacuation in Chelyabinsk.

During the first seven months of the war, 70 evacuation hospitals were deployed in the Chelyabinsk region, with 27,000 hospital beds and 11,000 medical personnel. At the time, the southern Urals experienced a critical shortage of highly qualified surgeons and medical staff. The shortage was caused by a lack of doctors and the need to send them to the front.

Another issue was the frequent placement of young, inexperienced individuals, who had only completed expedited medical courses, in evacuation hospitals without any practical experience. To address this issue, hospitals implemented measures to train doctors in the specific specialty required.

However, the whole process was complicated, since there were few specialists to provide a sufficient level of training for young doctors, including the lack of medical literature necessary for training. The evacuation of the Kiev United Medical Institute to the Chelyabinsk territory marked a dramatic improvement in the situation.

Borys Mykhailovych directly participated in the training and retraining of 136 military field surgery specialists and 230 doctors.

In 1944, after the liberation of Ukraine, the Kyiv Medical Institute returned from the city of Chelyabinsk to Kyiv. Due to the tenacious work of our compatriots, including B. M. Horodynskyi, the Chelyabinsk Medical Institute was established in 1944 at the Chelyabinsk First City Hospital, after the return of the Kyiv Medical Institute to the Motherland. The Chelyabinsk Medical Institute was founded with resources and personnel from the departments and clinics of the Kyiv United Medical Institute, who decided to stay there for various reasons.

The 1944 order for the restoration of the Kyiv Medical Institute stated: «to appoint Professor B. M. Horodynskyi as the head of the Department of General Surgery of the Sanitary and Hygienic Faculty». Currently, the department is referred to as the «Department of General Surgery No 2». The Kyiv Medical Institute was renamed as the National Medical University named after Academician O. O. Bogomolets.

During his tenure as department head, Borys Mykhailovych delivered courses in general, faculty, and hospital surgery, as well as military field surgery. During this period, the department developed methodologies for practical instruction on a number of topics within the general and faculty surgery curriculum. The instructional approach to surgery at the sanitary and hygienic faculty did not differ from that employed at other faculties of the university. The intended controversial scientific topics were not pursued by the department during this timeframe. However, the primary scientific domains of the department included rectal diseases and their surgical treatment, along with acute intestinal obstruction.

Four candidate dissertations were successfully defended under the leadership of B. M. Horodynskyi as the head of the department. He was the author of more than 50 scientific publications focused on the issues of purulent surgery, oncology, and abdominal surgery.

An exceptional characteristic of Borys Mykhailovych was his pedagogical approach and lecture delivery, which students remembered for a lifetime. His lectures were so remarkable that they were considered almost legendary among students. He served as an exemplary mentor for the young generation of doctors.

Regrettably, the infamous «doctors' case» – a criminal case against a group of prominent doctors – adversely impacted B. M. Horodynskyi's teaching and professional activities at the

department in 1953. Thus, on September 16, 1953, he was dismissed from his position as head of the department of surgery at the sanitary and hygienic faculty and reassigned to the role of associate professor within the same department. On July 26, 1955, he was dismissed from the associate professorship since he did not take part in the competition for the position. He dedicated the rest of his life to working at the Kyiv Regional Hospital, where he began his challenging yet illustrious journey as an outstanding Ukrainian surgeon. Borys Mykhailovych died in 1969.

Successes and failures shape an individual's personality, leading to the accumulation of invaluable life, professional, and practical experience. Individuals who are determined and self-assured have the capacity to identify appropriate answers

in challenging circumstances, leaving a significant impact and vital insights in the annals of our past for generations. It is crucial for us to preserve the memory of them, as these individuals set the highest standards, driving progress and influencing our future. One of such individuals was Borys Mykhailovych Horodynskyi. His life story serves as both a moral and professional benchmark for aspiring doctors and establishes the historical foundations of the medical profession.

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## Життя і діяльність Бориса Городинського: внесок у медичну науку та освіту

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Стаття присвячена життю та професійній діяльності Бориса Михайловича Городинського (1887—1969) — видатного українського хірурга, педагога та науковця. Висвітлено його шлях від студента Київського університету Св. Володимира до провідного фахівця в галузі загальної та військово-польової хірургії. Розглянуто основні етапи його кар'єри, зокрема роботу в клініках Києва, участь у Першій світовій війні, завідування кафедрами хірургії в Другому Київському медичному інституті та евакуацію до Челябінська під час Другої світової війни. Особливу увагу приділено його внеску в розробку та впровадження методик асептики й антисептики, хірургії органів черевної порожнини та лікування гнійних захворювань. Висвітлено педагогічну діяльність Бориса Городинського, його вплив на формування нового покоління лікарів, а також обставини звільнення під час «справи лікарів» 1953 року. Проаналізовано його спадщину в українській медицині, зокрема наукові праці, підготовку спеціалістів та організацію хірургічної освіти. Стаття підкреслює значення Городинського як однієї з ключових постатей української медицини ХХ століття, чье ім'я закарбоване в історії вітчизняної хірургії та медичної науки.