

On May 30, 2011, Professor Mahmoud Fathala received the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa at the University of Hasselt in recognition of his tremendous research on the origin and the advantages of diversity in reproductive health.

The following day he gave a memorable lecture on the occasion of a symposium on "Women's Health and diversity"

"Imagine a world where no woman is denied her right to health"

SEVEN PROPOSITIONS

- Let all her body be hers
- Women are ends and not means
- Women have a right to safe motherhood
 - Equity please
 - Women have a right to benefit from scientific progress
 - Beware! The Homo dogmaticus
- A universal prescription for women's health

Mahmoud FATHALLA



Left: Dr Willem Ombelet, Right: Prof Dr Mahmoud Fathalla

Biography

Professor Mahmoud Fathalla, was born in Egypt in 1935, earned his medical degree in Obstetrics and Gynaecology from the University of Cairo in 1962 and wrote his PhD at the Edinburgh University in 1967 on the topic of “Epidemiology of epithelial ovarian cancer”. He was Dean of the Medical School in Assiut University for 8 years. He joined the World Health Organization in 1986, and was Director of the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Program of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction until 1992, when he joined the Rockefeller Foundation as Senior Advisor for Biomedical and Reproductive Health Research and Training, till 1999. He chaired the IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) Medical Advisory Panel from 1986-1992. He was President of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) from 1994 to 1997 and Chairman of the WHO Global Advisory Committee on Health Research from 2000-2005.

He authored more than 150 scientific publications. Professor Fathalla has been an international campaigner for Safe Motherhood and a founder of the Safe Motherhood Initiative. His scientific interests include women's health, safe motherhood, ethics and human rights, contraceptive research and development and last but not least “reproductive health”. He has published extensively on issues of women's health and rights; authored the teaching video on maternal mortality “Why did Mrs X die”, translated into French, Arabic and Spanish, and widely distributed by the World Health Organization to teaching organizations.

In 1995 Professor Fathalla was awarded the Mastroianni-Segal Award by the World Academy of Art and Science. In 2001, he received the Ihsan Dogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize awarded by the World Health Organization.

In 2009 he received the prestigious United Nations Population Award. In his acceptance speech he touched on many of the issues facing women worldwide and emphasized his confidence and trust in the women to whom he has devoted his life. Some of his major wishes for a better world are the following:

- a world that treats women fairly and well, throughout their life course, as children, as adolescents, as young adults and as mature adults
- a world in which the girl child is her brother's equal in worth and in care, and, never again, will have her genitalia mutilated
- a world in which the adolescent girl will be seen as an asset for a good investment in our future
- a world in which no woman will have to risk her health and life because of an unwanted pregnancy, and in which women will be able to enjoy mutually fulfilling sexual relationships while capable of protecting themselves from disease
- a world that will shed the shame, disgrace and the scandal of leaving mothers to suffer and die when they are fulfilling the noble task for survival of our species

He is worldwide recognized as one of the most exceptional leaders for the health and rights of women in poor countries.

We are very proud that Professor Fathalla accepted to become an honorary member of the Editorial Board of Facts, Views & Vision in ObGyn.