

ETHICAL VIEWS OF KARL F. FUCHS, A PROMINENT 19TH-CENTURY THERAPIST FROM THE CITY OF KAZAN, RUSSIA (IN CELEBRATION OF THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH)

Abrosimova MYu ✉

Kazan State Medical University, Kazan, Russia

The article is dedicated to Karl Fuchs, a distinguished medical practitioner, scientist, public figure and professor within the Department of Therapy, Pathology, and Clinical Medicine, who served as both the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the Rector of Imperial Kazan University. Born in Germany, Karl Fuchs committed his life's work to the advancement of Kazan and well-being of its population. The central focus rests on the scientist's character traits, ethical views and his contributions to the medical, educational, and public spheres. It is shown how eminent 19-century public figures in Kazan evaluated Karl Fuch's life and work. The conclusions regarding the contemporary significance of his ethical principles are made.

Keywords: Karl Fuchs, history of medicine, medical ethics, Imperial Kazan University

✉ **Correspondence should be addressed:** Marina Y. Abrosimova
Butlerova St., 49, Kazan, 420012, Russia Republic of Tatarstan; marabro@yandex.ru

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ЭТИЧЕСКИЕ ВЗГЛЯДЫ ИЗВЕСТНОГО КАЗАНСКОГО ТЕРАПЕВТА ПЕРВОЙ ПОЛОВИНЫ XIX ВЕКА КАРЛА ФЕДОРОВИЧА ФУКСА (К 250-ЛЕТИЮ СО ДНЯ РОЖДЕНИЯ)

М. Ю. Абросимова ✉

Казанский государственный медицинский университет, Казань, Россия

Статья посвящена Карлу Федоровичу Фуксу — выдающемуся врачу, ученому, общественному деятелю, профессору кафедры терапии, патологии и клиники, декану медицинского факультета, ректору Императорского Казанского университета. Родившись в Германии, он посвятил всю свою жизнь Казани и ее жителям. Основное внимание уделено особенностям личности и этических взглядов ученого, тесно связанным с фактами его биографии, с врачебной, педагогической и общественной деятельностью. Приведены сведения об оценке деятельности К. Ф. Фукса известными представителями казанской общественности XIX в., сделаны выводы о значении его этических взглядов для современного общества.

Ключевые слова: Карл Фукс, история медицины, медицинская этика, Императорский Казанский университет

✉ **Для корреспонденции:** Марина Юрьевна Абросимова
ул. Булterова, д. 49, г. Казань, 420012, Россия Республика Татарстан; marabro@yandex.ru

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For every resident of Kazan, the name of Karl Fuchs has a sacred meaning. He is remembered as an eminent physician whose fame extended far beyond Kazan and its surrounding province. He is also known as a distinguished scientist at Kazan University who profoundly shaped its institutional growth, serving as a department head, dean of the Medical Faculty, and rector of the Imperial Kazan University. Finally, he is recognized as an ethnographer who provided the first comprehensive account of the Tatars' culture and way of life. Famous for his diverse interests, he complemented his studies in medicine and physiology with a passion for botany, zoology, ethnography, local history, archaeology, and numismatics.

The significance of this topic stems from the growing scholarly interest in the historical roots of how society's ethical values first developed. Examining Fuchs' ethical perspectives offers a deeper look into the era's intellectual climate and helps follow the development of moral philosophy in early 19th-century Russia.

This paper aims to examine the moral principles of K. Fuchs, exploring how they developed and shaped the history

of medical ethics and the moral standards of Russian doctors. To achieve this goal, the following objectives were established: to investigate the scientist's background, to analyze his written works for ethical insights, to identify his core moral principles, and to evaluate the long-term impact of his views on both his contemporaries and future generations.

Unfortunately, none of the available sources include Karl Fuchs's specific texts on medical ethics or direct quotes revealing his ethical views. However, his personal and professional legacy, coupled with observations from those who knew him, allow us to draw conclusions about his worldview and values.

Karl Friedrich Fuchs was born in Herborn (Germany) on September 6 (18), 1776, into an esteemed academic family. His father was a professor of theology, history, and eloquence, while his mother was the daughter of a professor of medicine who established the town's botanical garden. Having graduated from the University of Göttingen in 1797, he secured a medical degree from the University of Marburg the following year based on his research into the prominent Renaissance natural philosopher Andrea Cesalpino.

In 1800, Karl Fuchs came to Russia, where he first worked for a short time as a private practitioner in St. Petersburg, and then went on a trip to the Urals and Eastern Siberia, studying the local flora. In 1805, he began teaching natural history and botany as a professor at the newly founded Imperial Kazan University. From 1806, he served as a doctor at the gymnasium and university hospital. Between 1805 and 1818, as well as from 1827 to 1828, he also taught zoology. From 1818 until 1833, he worked as a professor in the Department of Therapy, Pathology, and Clinic. After Professor Brown's death in 1819, he was additionally requested to lecture on anatomy, physiology, and forensic medicine.

Between 1820 and 1823, Karl Fuchs headed the Medical Faculty, and he subsequently served as Kazan University's rector from 1823 to 1827.

Having received the title of honorary professor on May 6, 1833, Karl Fuchs retired, without losing his close ties with the university until his death. As noted by the distinguished historian N. P. Zagoskin in his *Biographical Dictionary of Professors and Teachers of the Imperial Kazan University (1804–1904)*, he passed away in Kazan on April 24, 1846, remaining deeply engaged in his scholarly research and highly sought-after medical practice until the very end [1].

Thousands of people came to see Karl Fuchs off on his last journey. Observers noted that the funeral procession extended across several avenues, with spectators occupying not only the streets but also residential windows, fences, and roofs [2]. Many famous people of Kazan delivered farewell words over his grave. The people of Kazan profoundly honor his legacy today: an avenue bears his name, a beautifully landscaped park features a statue of the professor at its center, and his former residence has been restored.

Throughout his lifetime, Fuchs earned broad recognition by dedicating his existence to the welfare of humanity. His multifaceted character and moral principles were forged by deeply rooted familial values, classical German philosophy (most notably the ideas of Kant and Hegel), the 18th-century Enlightenment, and a lifetime of engaging with diverse cultures and individuals.

As a contemporary of MYa Mudrov, it is inconceivable that Karl Fuchs would have inevitably been acquainted with the core ethical principles advocated by the forefather of Russian medical ethics. Examination of the literary evidence indicates profound parallels. According to Mya Mudrov, KF Fuchs possessed all the necessary attributes of an outstanding doctor, such as selflessness, empathy, readiness to help, professional integrity, etc.

Fuchs' legacy is fundamentally rooted in his interaction with the people of Kazan and its neighborhood, and investigation of the rich history and traditions of the Volga basin. The scientist respected the traditions and customs of different nations, which reflects such aspects of his ethical views as respect for the national, cultural and religious characteristics of patients.

In his anthropological research, he documented the existence of various ethnic groups, stressing their fundamental role in driving urban development. Furthermore, he articulated the significance of cultural heterogeneity and need in empathy and mutual understanding.

In the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, Tatar residents of Kazan were confined to designated residential districts, specifically the Old Tatar Quarter (dating back to the 1552 conquest) and the New Tatar Quarter (1751). They differed from other districts of the city in their way of life, religion, national traditions, etc. [3]. Karl Fuchs specially settled in the not prestigious Old Tatar settlement to live among the Tatars.



Fig. 1. Karl Fuchs

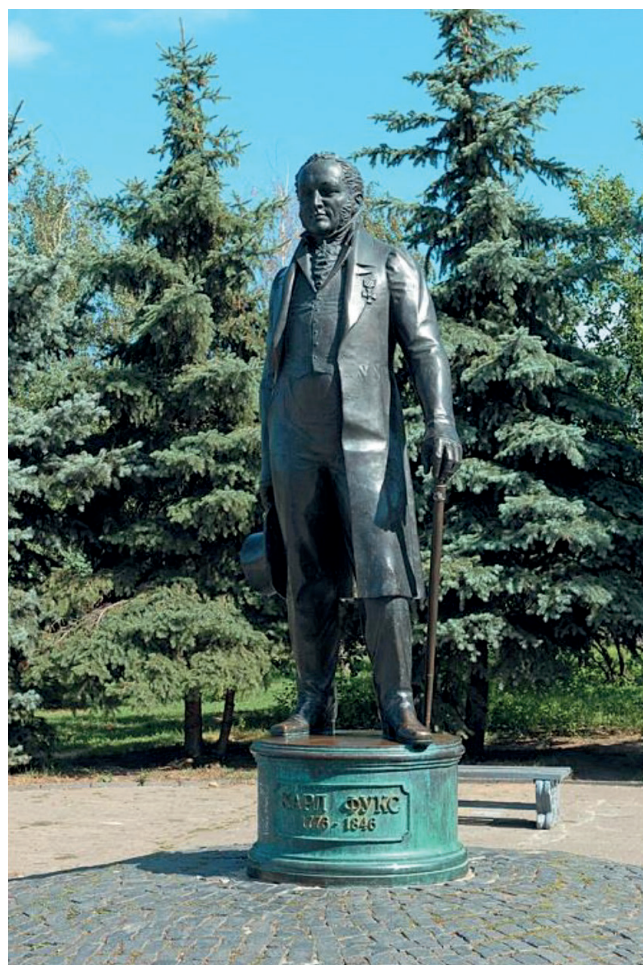


Fig. 2. Monument to Karl Fuchs

He examined their daily routines and living conditions, which proved essential for comprehending the etiology of various diseases and the nuances of their progression. Knowing more than 10 languages, Karl Fuchs gained the trust of Kazan residents by communicating with them in their native language. Consequently, he was even issued a personalized *Tabib Fuchs* (Doctor Fuchs) seal and was granted special permission to treat Tatar women, which was an unprecedented privilege for a non-Muslim physician at that time. He held profound empathy for Tatar women, describing them as “pitiable figures of the oppressive Orient” and “eternal prisoners” [4].

Karl Fuchs was distinguished by his cheerful, good-natured disposition, sociable nature and curiosity. These qualities facilitated the professor's integration into the Kazan society. According to his peers, he quickly built a wide network, visited many families, and established a highly sought-after reputation as a physician. After the great fire in Kazan in September 1856, thousands of residents were left homeless, urgently seeking basic necessities and support. Professor Fuchs invited the gymnasium inspector N. M. Ibragimov and his family to live in his big house [6]. During the 1930s and 1940s, the residence of Karl Fuchs and his wife, Alexandra Andreevna — a prominent local author and poet — served as “the intellectual hub for the city's entire cultural elite”, as noted by NP Zagoskin [1]. AS Pushkin subsequently visited the area in late 1833, gathering historical accounts to document the Pugachev revolt [7].

K. Fuchs extended the exact same standard of care to every patient, without exception, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, financial situation, or origin. At Fuchs's funeral, Professor EF Aristov noted that “the brightest light crowning the sacred memory of Karl Fuchs was his tangible compassion for his neighbors. He drew no lines between people, offering a profound, boundless devotion to all” [8].

Mikhail Rybushkin, an eminent historian of Kazan who was personally acquainted with Fuchs, noted: “On numerous occasions, I have observed Fuchs' consulting room packed with poor people battling severe ailments, yet every single one of them would depart his home visibly uplifted, hoping for their recovery. They all trusted in Karl Fuch's mastery profoundly. Was this not the very reason Fuchs' countenance consistently radiated warmth and genuine benevolence?” [9] K Fuchs consistently refrained from exploiting his patients for personal financial gain, dedicating his own resources to supporting the underprivileged instead. Upon his appointment as a trustee for the Kazan Committee of the Imperial Humane Society in 1816, he committed to donating 50 rubles to the fund annually and providing complimentary medical care for the organization's underprivileged beneficiaries. At his request, many poor families received assistance from the city authorities [5]. Whenever patients lacked the financial means, Karl Fuchs directed them to a specific pharmacy where they could acquire medication free of charge, as he had already settled their tabs out of pocket. Since the local peasants were inherently distrustful of pharmaceutical drugs, Fuchs used traditional folk remedies whenever possible, making sure he was always equipped with a ready stock of therapeutic herbs. “To show their thankfulness”, the locals could assist him by harvesting the plants he sought.

NN Bulich, who studied the history of the formation of Kazan University in the early years of its existence (1805–1819), wrote: “With his extensive practice and universal respect he enjoyed for his knowledge of the matter and the actual multitude of lucky cures, Fuchs could have made a large fortune. Instead, he was a selfless physician, who dedicated his time to the poor, often providing them with the fees he reluctantly collected from wealthy patients” [6].

Karl Fuchs was dedicated to continuous professional growth and made a major impact on the rise of medical education in Kazan. He was convinced that the purpose of education extends beyond mere knowledge acquisition, functioning instead as a vital catalyst for moral growth and development of an ethically mature character. In his doctoral thesis, he claimed that a comprehensive general education is essential for anyone aspiring to be a skilled physician. Unlike many early foreign professors at Kazan University who taught in Latin, French, or German, Karl Fuchs viewed it as an ethical responsibility to teach in Russian. He affectionately referred to Russian as the language of his second homeland, a choice that earned him deep admiration from his students [10]. He was the sole non-Russian to hold membership in the “Society of Lovers of Russian Literature.” [5].

Professor treated his students with love and respect. Based on the memoirs of Sergey Aksakov, one of the earliest students at Kazan University who went on to become a prominent writer and critic, the school's “exams felt like friendly, informal family gatherings, where professor Karl Fuchs excelled specifically in natural history” [11]. By presenting his lectures as interactive dialogues and addressing questions, he captured his students' interest, resulting in high and enthusiastic attendance.

His name is associated with the introduction of new diagnostic methods, specifically auscultation. He was a pioneer of clinical education at Kazan University. He oversaw the expansion of the university hospital and championed innovative teaching methods. For instance, he introduced the role of the clinical resident, directing students to actively manage patient care and maintain detailed medical records. He introduced outpatient case studies into therapy education, establishing practical polyclinic training for students. By inviting students to his consultations, Karl Fuchs passed on to them not only knowledge about medicine, but also taught them the art of communicating with patients [12].

Throughout his articles and speeches, he highlighted the need for the compassionate care of patients. Eyewitnesses reported that Dr. Fuchs's bedside manner promoted healing and inspired hope: “Upon hearing his voice, patients experienced immediate pain relief, renewed optimism, and a restored will to live” [8].

The scientist found his purpose in dedicating his life to science and the community. He believed scientists have a duty to use their expertise to benefit society and enhance daily life. Fuchs highlighted that researchers are heavily accountable for their innovations and theories. The application of knowledge must not cause injury to society, and empirical research should always be governed by moral integrity. He also prioritized public health by regularly publishing statistical reports on the medical status of Kazan residents in *Kazanskiye Izvestia* and other periodicals. These updates kept the public informed about ongoing epidemics, specifically detailing the devastating 1830 cholera outbreak in Kazan alongside the measures used to combat it. KF Fuchs's public lectures on Kazan's sanitary conditions were highly popular [13].

CONCLUSION

Fuchs' ideas undoubtedly impacted Kazan's scholarly community in the first half of the 19th century. His teachings and publications motivated peers and learners, helping to shape a society centered on humanistic principles. His dedication to his medical practice and ethical duties — rooted in deep respect, compassion, and accountability for patient well-being — has inspired countless generations of medical professionals. In modern medical training, the concept of

education as a tool for building moral character remains essential. Fuchs actively promoted cultural and religious tolerance, fostering the shared understanding that became the cornerstone of peaceful coexistence among the Volga region's diverse communities. They are essential in today's environment of globalization, ethnic conflicts, and migration. In light of ongoing advancements in biotech and AI, his remarks

regarding a researcher's ethical obligations for the outcomes of their research are particularly significant.

By exploring the work of KF Fuchs, we can better grasp the beginnings of Russian medical ethics and find solutions to modern ethical issues. His life and his ideas can serve as a guide for doctors, scientists, teachers and all those who strive to build a humane and just society.

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