

David Wainshelboim With His Colleagues



This is me, David Wainshelboim, photographed with my team during an operation. I am second from left wearing a mask, beside me my is colleague Aleksandr Shepelev, Kishinev, 1950s.

In 1945 my uncle helped me to prepare for entrance exams to the Medical College of Kishinev. I passed the exams successfully and was admitted. I finished my college in 1951 and got a job assignment to the hospital in a small district town in Irkutsk region in Siberia. I worked as a surgeon/ophthalmologist. The hospital where I was sent was a complete mess and I took over my job with great enthusiasm. I operated on patients with various problems: I helped at baby delivery, went to the taiga, when workers were injured, and provided treatment to all kinds of patients. I made friends in Siberia. One of my friends worked at the power plant and Sasha Kligma, another friend, was procurer at the shipyard. They were both Jews. We were friends and supported each other: my friends refurbished my room. We also celebrated Jewish holidays. I started fasting on Yom Kippur in 1943, when I got to know that my parents perished, and I still observe this fast.

Later I worked and studied in Odessa for a year. Then I returned to Kishinev. I stayed with my sister before I received this one-bedroom apartment. At that time it was a luxurious dwelling with running water and a toilet. In Kishinev I went to work at the trachomatous clinic. I was a doctor and often went to Moldovan villages to visit patients with trachoma: it's an eye disease resulting from lack of vitamins. It's common in poor countries. Later I went to work at the Kishinev ophthalmologic hospital. I was a surgeon and worked there till I retired. I got along well with patients and colleagues. I performed the most difficult operations and my opinion was important. I earned well. At least I managed to support myself and my sister.