

# Dr. Ali Cerrahoglu

## ● A care provider

Dr. Ali Cerrahoglu graduated from Hacettepe University Medical Faculty in Ankara in 1984. After graduation, he practiced rural medicine as the only doctor at the Kavaklıdere Health Center in Yatağan, Muğla for 3 years. Together with a nurse and a medical assistant, he served a population of 10,000 in 11 villages.

During these years, as part of the national vaccination campaign, he implemented the childhood vaccination program and made sure that all of the children in the population were vaccinated. In 1985, using a Sinclair 48 K + microdriver computer, he established a system - a first-ever in a health center in Turkey - which tracks the patient visits and vaccination records electronically. Besides his routine patient care, he screened the population for endemic goiter.

Following his rural medicine practice, he completed his specialty training in Family Medicine at Ankara Numune Hospital (1987-1990). For the next two years, he served in the Turkish Army as military doctor. He returned to civilian life as a family doctor at the Mother and Children Care and Family Planning Health Center in Tarsus. Soon after joining the center, he assumed the head physician role and directed the center that served a population of 300.000 in the Tarsus district for 18 years. ,

In parallel to his at the 'Mother and Children Care and Family Planning Health Center', he also ran a private office practice on part time basis and served as school doctor responsible for providing health services to students, staff and teachers at an international boarding school (Tarsus American College). He continues to practice as school doctor at Tarsus American College.

## \* A decision maker

He is the first family physician in Turkey to attend an international family medicine world congress. (**WONCA/SIMG Congress; The Hague**, the Netherlands, June 1993)

Dr. Ali Cerrahoğlu mainly provided gynecological and perinatal care as well as pediatric services at the health center. He especially focused on ultrasound screening, and family planning procedures such as teaching and applying intrauterine devices (IUD) at 'Mother and Children Care and Family Planning Health Center'. . As a trainer in Family Planning and Family Medicine, he provided applied certificate training on family planning and IUD procedures to doctors, nurses and family medicine interns. He organized demonstration sessions to trainees at the Family Medicine Department of Çukurova University. He also presented his experiences at conferences on Family Medicine and Family Planning.

As the director of the 'Mother and Children Care and Family Planning Health Center' he recognized the physical limitations of the center and facilitate the move of the center to a larger facility equipped with a laboratory and ultrasound services. By collaborating with non-governmental organizations he raised funds to start a 'Mobile Health Clinic Project' that included gynecological examination services and application of IUDs. With this vehicle, he brought health care services to women and children in the parts of the city and villages which were underprivileged in terms of access to health services for a period of ten years voluntarily. The two-day per week mobile service also included providing healthy life style conferences and training to the community.

In 2007, once again through funds raised with the contribution of non-governmental organizations, he initiated a collaboration between 'Mother and Children Care and Family Planning Health Center' and Çukurova University, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Pathology departments for cervical cancer screening and follow up of women who could not otherwise financially afford this service. One thousand women were examined and cervical smears were analyzed at the university pathology clinic for cervical cancer screening. Patients who needed further testing and procedures were referred to obgyn clinic of the university.

Since 2004, one of Dr. Cerrahoğlu's core areas of interest has been to promote healthy lifestyle and prevention of obesity in childhood and adulthood. He organized the project "Screening Overweight / Obesity rates in Tarsus schools" which included height and weight measurement of a sample of 1500 students in 12 schools in Tarsus. Volunteer 'city council health commission' members were trained to conduct the field work.

## \* A communicator

Dr. Ali Cerrahoğlu has organized numerous meetings, conferences through collaborations with non-governmental organizations and the local administrations on preventive medicine, obesity, healthy lifestyle, reproductive health and addictions. He provided education sessions for adults and students at homes, schools, and other venues. These sessions were typically organized by non-profit organizations such as city council, Rotary, Lions, and women's associations.

Dr. Cerrahoglu was the trainer of the '**Reproductive health education for high school students project**' organized by the Youth Division of the Tarsus Urban Council. He educated all the 10th and 11th grade high school students in Tarsus (totally 4000 students) on reproductive health. The education sessions were once a week for a duration of 7 months where students attended in groups of 300 ). This 2005 project achieved the second place in UNDP, Coca Cola and Habitat youth association contest.

Dr. Cerrahoğlu also acted as the volunteered producer and host of the weekly TV program on health (Güney TV [www.guneytv.com.tr](http://www.guneytv.com.tr)) between 2004 – 2014. The aim of the program was to educate the public about healthy lifestyle and preventive medicine. A total of 280 programs were

aired. While in some programs he interviewed specialists from different branches on specific health issues, in others he conducted solo programs on general health topics with live telephone questions from the viewers. List of programs:  
(<https://docs.google.com/a/cerrahoglu.net/document/d/1NELxDIGw2pMhE25bCv8rXy7e0iridcZvmp3U7rdIU5k/preview>)

Since 2013, he is a columnist in the local newspaper, “Yeni Mersin”, where he writes (<http://yenimersin33.com/yazar/alicerrahoglu@gmail.com>) on general health topics once a week. He also contributes to the Turkish Family Doctors Association web page; ([www.tahud.org.tr](http://www.tahud.org.tr)) and Association of Mersin Family Doctors web page ([www.mahder.org.tr](http://www.mahder.org.tr)) with his health related articles.

## \* A community leader

Dr. Ali Cerrahoğlu was awarded the “Doctor of the Year” award in 2006. He received his award from the Prime Minister of Turkey for his Professional contributions. He was the health sector representative of the Rotary Exchange Turkish delegation during a visit to the USA in 1996, and was awarded the ‘Kentucky Colonel Award’ by the governor of Kentucky. In 1999, he was awarded the “Occupational Service Award” presented by the Tarsus Rotary Club for his Mobile Clinic Project and community health services. In 2005, he received the second place in UNDP, Coca Cola and Habitat Youth Association Contest in recognition of his one-year project educating high school students on reproductive health in Tarsus.

Dr. Ali Cerrahoglu continues his volunteering endeavors as the President of the Tarsus Urban Council (city council). The members are composed of representatives from government, local administration (municipality) and NGOs. He was the co-chair of the “Urban Symposium on Tarsus” (15-17 November 2012) which was organized by the Tarsus City Council with contribution from Tarsus Governor, Municipality, Mersin University, Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Trade. There were 61 academic presentations on economy, tourism, archeology, history and education in the symposium. He was also the editor of the symposium book.

Dr. Cerrahoglu was the chair of symposium and workshop on ‘Tarsus becoming a province (2012)’. Tarsus is the 26th biggest city in Turkey, but is not granted provincial status. Tarsus citizens have struggled to become a province since decades. In this event Tarsus values and dynamics were evaluated in five different workgroups moderated by academicians from Gazi University, Ankara. The proceedings were published in two books and distributed to decision makers in Turkey.

On another community cause, Dr. Cerrahoğlu leads the ‘Tarsus University’ campaign’. Tarsus community has a desire to have a university in the city. He catalyzed the establishment of a ‘higher council’ and coordinated the preparation of a file containing justifications for the establishment of a university with a Medical Faculty in Tarsus. To date, fifty thousand citizens signed the petition initiated by the City Council led by Dr. Cerrahoğlu. The collected

signatures and the justification file were forwarded to the decision makers (including the President, Prime Minister and the ministers of Turkey) ([www.tarsusuniversitesi.com](http://www.tarsusuniversitesi.com))

In another City Council project, Dr. Cerrahoglu ran the 'Bests of Tarsus initiative'. This one day sports festival was a track and field festival for women during the "8th of March World Women's Day" and was repeated at the 'National Youth and Sports Day' track and field event on 19th of May. The most accomplished female athletes in running, long and high jump categories received awards. Seminar with national high jump record holder; Burcu Ayhan - as a role model - was organized to promote sports and a healthy life style.

### **INNOVATIVE PROJECTS:**

He is the founder of a scholarship oriented fund raising campaign named 'Brick Fund Project'. The aim of this campaign is to support successful and economically disadvantaged students. In this fund, contributors donate "virtual bricks" of the walls of a Tarsus American College school building. As can be seen in the website created for this campaign ([www.birtugladasenkoy.com](http://www.birtugladasenkoy.com)), based on the number of bricks donated by each contributor, the contributor's name takes up an area on the school wall proportional to the amount of money he/she donates. Contributions made to date reached 1.8 million dollars. The interest of this endowment fund already facilitated a better education for many economically disadvantaged students. Twenty two economically disadvantaged students who received this scholarship are now studying at best universities (including medical schools) in Turkey and overseas and are still being supported.

He is the founder of a special affinity card project, which generates additional revenue for the 'Brick scholarship fund'. So far, 750 volunteers using the card contributed 20,000 TL per year for the scholarship fund. These funds are also awarded according to the 'Brick Fund Scholarship' guidelines.

He is the founder of '**Fuel for Bricks Project**'. In this project donors contribute to the scholarship fund by filling gasoline to their cars. A special credit card allows the donation of a portion of the fuel cost to the 'Brick Scholarship Fund'. Currently, 200 donors use this card to support disadvantaged students' education.

He is one of the founders of Tarsus Tennis Club and served as club president for four years. With its 7 internationally certified clay courts the club mainly focuses on motivating children and adults for a physically active life style.

### **\* A team member**

Dr. Ali Cerrahoğlu has been a role model as a team member in all of his pursuits. With his positive energy, he was able to mobilize team members as a school doctor and in projects involving family planning, mobile health services, as well as in community services. As an

effective and motivating leader, he has succeeded in making all parties an active and contributing participant of these activities.

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## **FULL DESCRIPTION**

### **Ali Cerrahoğlu; MD, Family Physician**

#### **Education**

- Family Medicine residency; Ankara Numune Hospital- 1990
- Hacettepe University Medical School - 1984
- Tarsus American College - 1978
- Educator's education - Adana Çukurova University and Tel Aviv University
- Turkish Medical Association; Occupational health training (A and B certificate)

#### **Medical practice**

- Government Health Center at Muğla, Yatağan, Kavaklıdere - 1984-1987
- Ankara Anittepe Military Health Clinic - 1990-1991
- Tarsus 'Mother-Child Care and Family Planning Clinic' (Chief Educator of 'Family Planning certificate training' for doctors and nurses - Head Doctor 1992-2010)
- Office practice - Family Medicine practice at own clinic (1992-2010)
- School medicine - Tarsus American College and SEV Primary School Doctor 1993+

#### **Trophies**

- Doctor of The Year Award 2006 (Prime Minister and Ministry of health of Turkey)
- Occupational Service Award (International Rotary Tarsus 1999 - Mobile Clinic Project and community health service)
- Kentucky Colonel Award - Kentucky USA 1996
- Second place in UNDP, Coca Cola and Habitat youth association contest. (Educating high school students on reproductive health 2005)

#### **Organizational memberships**

- European Academy of Teachers in General Practice (Euract)
- Turkish Association of Family Doctors - TAHUD (founding member)
- Turkish Association of Family Doctors Honorary Council (Chair and member, 2000-2008)
- Board of Turkish Association of Family Doctors-TAHUD (Chair and member of the referee committee, 2006-2011)
- Turkish Medical Association
- Turkish Medical Association Mersin Honorary Council (1998-2000)
- Tarsus Mother and Child Care Association (a non-profit organization to promote and support healthcare of women and children, Chair of Board 1993 to date)
- Tarsus City Council (Chair of Board, 2011 to date)
- Turkish Family Physicians email group (Founder and moderator-1300 members)

### **Other memberships**

- Tarsus American College Alumni Association (Chair of Board, 2008 to date)
- Tarsus American College CIS Accreditation process 'Section G - Student and Community Life' chair of the committee (2006)
- Tarsus Tennis Club Founder 1999 (Chair, 2007-2011)
- TAC Sports Club Founder 1995 (Chair, 1995-2004): 9 teams with 4 categories and 300 licensed young players.
- Member of "Tarsus Marathon organizing committee"
- Tarsus İdmanyurdu: The professional soccer team of Tarsus. Board member and volunteer team doctor, (1995-2004).
- Yıldırımspor (an amateur football club). Board member and team doctor (1994-1995)
- Rotary Club member (1996-2004)

### **Special interests**

- Healthy lifestyle promotion / training
- Family Planning practice and training
- School Medicine
- Screening childhood and adult obesity
- Community health projects
- Sports Medicine
- Medical data keeping

## **VOLUNTARY PROJECTS / ACADEMIC WORK**

### **MEDICAL SERVICE AND PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFE STYLE IN COMMUNITY**

#### **Mobile Health Care Clinic**

- As the responsible doctor for the only 'Family Planning Unit' for 300.000 people in Tarsus and surrounding villages; 'Tarsus Mother and Child Care and Family Planning Health Center' Recognized to bring the much needed health care to the women and children at the rural areas of the city.
- He developed a 'matching grant project' for a 'mobile family planning clinic' with the support of Tarsus Rotary Club.
- In 1996, visited 8 Rotary Clubs in Kentucky, USA, and gave talks to seek support for the project. These fundraising efforts resulted with the purchase of a modern 'mobile clinic' equipped for gynecological examination, intra uterine device application and child examination
- For the next 10 years, the mobile clinic with volunteering doctors and nurses visited (900+ days of voluntary service) rural areas where there is no family planning service available. Men were given health education as groups in local cafes and schools while women and children were examined and educated in the mobile clinic.

### **Cervical cancer screening of 1000 women in Tarsus (2007)**

- Initiated a collaboration between Mother Child Care Unit with Çukurova University Obstetrics and Gynecology and Pathology departments for cervical cancer screening of 1000 women who cannot otherwise afford financially.
- 1000 women were examined and cervical smears were analyzed at the university pathology clinic for cervical cancer screening.
- Patients who needed further testing and procedures were referred to obgyn clinic of the university.
- All the procedures, tests and examinations were done free of charge for the patients.

### **Projects for screening and prevention of Childhood Obesity**

- Screening Overweight / Obesity rates in Tarsus schools:
  - Height and weight of a sample of 12 schools and 1500 students in Tarsus are measured by trained volunteer city council health commission members. Obesity rates were calculated and compared among 12 schools.
- Since 2004, height and weight of all students of Tarsus American College are measured twice a year and obesity rates are reported (Cerrahoğlu A. Growth Monitoring and Overweight/Obesity Rates of Primary School Students in Tarsus.TJFMPC 2007;1:6-8 <http://www.yusbed.net/tjfmpr/article/view/5000056047> ).
- School Based Screening of Students Dr. Ali CERRAHOĞLU: 13th International Eastern Mediterranean Family Medicine Symposium DAAHS -2014.

## Health education projects for the community

- Provided education sessions for women, men and students at homes, schools, auditoriums that were organized by non-profit organizations such as; Rotary, Lions, and other women's associations. The topics included reproductive medicine, hygiene, addictions, healthy eating obesity and infectious diseases.

## 'Reproductive health education' for high school students (Project with Tarsus City Council)

- Educated all 10th and 11th grade high school students in Tarsus (totally 4000 students) on reproductive medicine. The education sessions were once a week for 7 months and students attended as groups (2005). This project achieved the second place in; UNDP, Coca Cola and Habitat youth association contest.

## Health promotion on media

- **TV program**
  - Producer and host of the weekly TV program on health (Güney TV [www.guneytv.com.tr](http://www.guneytv.com.tr)) between 2004 - 2014. Totally 280 programs were broadcasted. Specialists from different branches were invited for some programs, while others were solo programs on general health topics with live telephone questions. List of programs: (<https://docs.google.com/a/cerrahoglu.net/document/d/1NELxDIGw2pMhE25bCv8rXy7e0iridcZvmp3U7rdIU5k/preview>)
- **Newspapers and web**
  - Wrote weekly in the local newspaper, "Yeni Mersin" (<http://yenimersin33.com/yazar/alicerrahoglu@gmail.com>) on general health topics.
  - Wrote health promotion essays in Turkish association of family doctors web page; ([www.tahud.org.tr](http://www.tahud.org.tr)) and 'Association of Mersin Family Doctors' web page ([www.mahder.org.tr](http://www.mahder.org.tr))

## OTHER VOLUNTARY PROJECTS

- **Urban Symposium on Tarsus (co-chair) 15-17 November 2012**
  - A three-day symposium organized by Tarsus City Council with contribution of Tarsus Governor, Municipality, Mersin University, Chamber of Commerce,



Chamber of Trade. 61 academic presentations on economy, tourism, archeology, history, education topics. Editor of the congress book  
([www.tarsuskentsempozyumu.org](http://www.tarsuskentsempozyumu.org))

- **Chair of the Symposium and workshop on ‘Tarsus becoming a province’**
  - Tarsus is the 26th biggest city in Turkey but is not a province. Tarsus citizens have struggled to become a province since decades. With this symposium and workshop Tarsus values and dynamics were evaluated, documented with 5 different workgroups moderated by academic support from Gazi University. Two books were published and distributed to decision makers of the country.
  
- **‘Tarsus University’ campaign**
  - Tarsus community has a desire to have a university in the city. Catalyzed the establishment of a ‘higher council’ and coordinated the preparation of a file containing justifications for the establishment of a university with a Medical Faculty in Tarsus.
  - To date, fifty thousand citizens signed the campaign initiated by the city council. Gathered signatures and the justification file are forwarded to the decision makers (including the president, prime minister and the ministers of Turkey) ([www.tarsusuniversitesi.com](http://www.tarsusuniversitesi.com))
  
- **Projects for promoting physical activity (City Council)**
  - **‘Bests of Tarsus’ projects**
    - Track and field festival for women at “8th of March World Women’s Day”
      - A day long sports festival with sport events for women
      - The best in running, long and high jumpings were awarded.
      - Seminar with high jumping record holder; Burcu Ayhan as a role model to promote sports and healthy life style
    - ‘Youth Day’ track and field event
      - Both; women and men attended track and field events

## **INNOVATIVE PROJECTS:**

- **Pioneer in ‘Electronic data keeping’ in a primary care health center in Turkey**  
Vaccination records of all children of 10 villages and patient visits data were kept with a Sinclair 48 K + microdriver computer. (Muğla Yatağan Kavaklıdere health center - 1984-1987. First health center in Turkey keeping patient data electronically.)
  
- **(WONCA/SIMG Congress, The Hague, Netherlands, June 1993)** (First family physician in Turkey to attend an international world congress)

- **SCHOLARSHIP PROJECTS FOR SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL AND DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS**

- **'Brick Fund Project'**

- Founder of a scholarship oriented fund raising campaign. In this fund, contributors donate "virtual bricks" from one of the walls of a Tarsus American College school building. As can be seen in the website created for this campaign ([www.birtugladasenkoy.com](http://www.birtugladasenkoy.com)), based on the number of bricks donated by each contributor, the contributor's name populates an area on the school wall proportional to the amount of money he/she donates. Contributions reached to 1.8 million dollars so far. The interest of this endowment fund already facilitated a better education for many economically disadvantaged students. Twenty two students who received this scholarship are now studying at best universities (including medical school) in Turkey and overseas. These students continue to receive support from the "Brick fund" during their university studies.

- **'Affinity Card' Project**

- Founder of a special affinity card project, which generates additional monetary source for the Tarsus American College scholarship fund. So far 750 volunteers using the card contributed 20,000 TL per year for the scholarship fund. These funds are also awarded according to the 'Brick Fund Scholarship' guidelines.

- **'Fuel for Bricks' project**

- In this project, donors contribute to the scholarship fund by filling gasoline to their cars. A special credit card allows the donation of a portion of the fuel cost to the Tarsus American College scholarship fund. Currently, 200 donors use this card to support disadvantaged students' education.

- **Mobile health care clinic** (detailed under voluntary projects\*)

## **PERSONAL**

- He is married with Yeşim Cerrahoğlu since 1985. She is a dietician in Tarsus and contributed to the childhood obesity screening project.
- He has two children; his son is a computer engineer and his daughter studies communications at Bilgi University
- Hobbies and interests:
  - Computer programming on data management
  - Masters track and field (attends national and Balkanian high jumping competitions in his age group)
  - Tennis

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