



# Tribute to Dr. José Félix Patiño Restrepo

February 15, 1927 - February 26, 2020

*Homenaje al doctor José Félix Patiño Restrepo*

*15 de febrero de 1927 - 26 de febrero de 2020*

*Homenagem ao doutor José Félix Patiño Restrepo*

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“Medicine is an intensely moral activity”

José Félix Patiño Restrepo

Medicine in Colombia has lost one of its most important pillars, and clinical nutrition has lost its main pioneer. Dr. José Félix Patiño Restrepo died on February 26, 2020 at the age of 93 in Bogotá.

He conceived and lived medicine as few doctors in Latin America have. Through his work and teachings he confirmed his love and passion for the art of medicine. Humanist par excellence, he knew how to instill the highest ethical and altruistic sense into medical practice. His love for books led him to assemble the most notable collection of medical books, adding up to a total of 13,000 volumes, and which also included books on philosophy, history and opera, among others. I remember how, with great pride, he would invite his residents and interns to visit the library at his house. He would exhibit it as one who presents his first love, full of excitement, modesty, honesty and satisfaction. To enter the library meant entering an endless world of knowledge from which one emerged transformed, and with an indescribable desire to get closer, to know more. The visit continued in the dining room where we had a bite, accompanied by a pleasant conversation about books, history, and life, and María Callas, his muse, his eternal love, crooning incessantly in the back. These rendezvous allowed us to get acquainted with a generous,

cultured, humanistic human being. From the first visit to his library I will forever treasure a 90-minute cassette recorded with Dr. Patiño's voice “What is the Opera?”

Today, his collection is gathered in the central library of Universidad Nacional de Colombia, an institution he always considered his home, and which will be the guarantor of preserving its unity. It was inaugurated on February 15, 2017 under the name “Biblioteca José Félix Patiño Restrepo”.

His contributions stand out in so many ways – scientifically, socially, politically, academically. Among them is the development of Parenteral Nutrition in the context of nutritional therapy in Colombia, whose beginnings were witnessed by Clínica de Marly and Hospital de la Samaritana in the 1970s. He was co-founder of the current Hospital Universitario Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, where in the early 1980s he instituted one of the first interdisciplinary nutritional support groups in Latin America. Since then, doctors, nurses, pharmaceutical chemists, nutritionists and other professionals have been trained in nutritional therapy, which Dr. Patiño calls, with great erudition, the fourth advent<sup>(1)</sup>.

For Dr. Patiño Restrepo, parenteral nutrition is positioned after anesthesia, the principles of asepsis and antisepsis, and the onset of antibiotics, as the fourth advent, or one of the great paradigms in medicine. He defines it as “a great event, an event in the history medicine”. For this reason, Revista de Nutrición Clínica y Metabolismo launched its first issue with a guest editorial titled “The Fourth Advent”. In it, Dr. Patiño refers to and pays homage to Dr. Stanley J. Dudrick as the pioneer in parenteral nutrition. Coincidentally, Dr. Dudrick died on January 18, and in this journal issue we also pay tribute

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to him. Clinical nutrition is mourning, not only in Latin America but also in the world.

Dr. Patiño was a great visionary and always at the forefront of technology. For example, computerized medical information was made possible in Colombia as a result of an agreement promoted by Dr. Patiño and signed between the National Library of Medicine (USA) and the Colombian government. In the field of nutritional therapy, just as the world was trying to break out from the “hyperalimentation” model with high caloric input in the 1990s, he and his group published the results of hypocaloric support in the critically ill patient in the *World Journal of Surgery* in 1999<sup>(3)</sup>. They showed how hypocaloric and hyperproteic nutrition during the first days of the flow phase of the adaptive response to stress could have beneficial effects on metabolic response and probably also in care costs. Currently other groups of researchers are trying to confirm what Dr. Patiño and his group showed 20 years ago.

His passion for history and epistemology became evident in all his academic reflections. In the chapter on biological bases of nutrition of his book “*Metabolismo, Nutrición y Shock*”, the prologue of which was written by

Dr. Dudrick, he defines these bases as the very essence of life processes. But he does not limit himself to defining the thermodynamic and genetic bases of this process. Rather, he makes an extensive journey through time and space starting with paleochemistry, to explain through nutrition the origin of life itself, its permanence and its development on Earth<sup>(3)</sup>.

For these reasons, I was not surprised when in 1998, during my first year living in Paris he asked me to translate from French into Spanish a text on a decorative mural on the great amphitheater of the Faculty of Medicine at the Université Paris Descartes. I fulfilled my task with great care, and included a photo I took during the visit of which would shortly after be my University. This neoclassical mural painted by Urbain Bourgeois at the end of the 19th century, depicts an assembly of great physicians from antiquity to the 19th century. Undoubtedly, we could give Dr. Patiño and Dr. Dudrick a place of honor in this assembly.

In this issue of the journal we pay tribute to two great human beings who gave everything for medicine, their patients and their students. Clinical nutrition is orphaned. Their legacy will live forever.



From left to right: Doctors Diana Cárdenas, Arturo Vergara, José Félix Patiño Restrepo, Sonia Echeverri, and Manuel Cadena. Photo taken at the opening of the 42nd International Course of Metabolic and Nutritional Therapy at the Hospital Universitario Santa Fe de Bogotá, April 2019.

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