

CULTURE AND MEDICINE

Dr. José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez, Associate Professor of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Doctor José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez is an example of dedication and discipline in Medical Microbiology and Parasitology in the center of the country.

Objective: to highlight the life and work of the Doctor as an example of a professional committed to his patients and students.

Method: a documentary research was carried out using the historical-logical method for the study of the chronological succession of the events that took place in his life, the documentary analysis of the work file, the *curriculum vitae* and the autobiography and the interviews granted by the professor.

Development: a review is made of the main events of his career, his positions, his responsibilities and the role played in medical assistance and teaching in the Specialty.

Conclusions: the trajectory, example and teachings of Dr. José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez make him an example for present and future generations of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology Professionals.

Key words: faculty; microbiology; parasitology

RESUMEN

Introducción: el Doctor José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez es un ejemplo de dedicación y disciplina en la Microbiología y la Parasitología Médicas en el centro del país.

Objetivo: destacar la vida y la obra del Doctor como ejemplo de profesional comprometido con sus pacientes y sus estudiantes.

Método: se realizó una investigación de tipo documental que utilizó el método histórico-lógico para el estudio de la sucesión cronológica de los hechos acontecidos en su vida, el análisis documental del expediente laboral, del *curriculum vitae* y la autobiografía y las entrevistas concedidas por el profesor.

Desarrollo: se hace una reseña de los principales acontecimientos de su carrera, de sus cargos, de sus responsabilidades y del papel desempeñado en la asistencia y la docencia médica en la Especialidad.

Conclusiones: la trayectoria, el ejemplo y las enseñanzas del Doctor José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez lo convierten en un ejemplo para las presentes y las futuras generaciones de Profesionales de la Microbiología y la Parasitología Médicas.

Palabras clave: docentes; microbiología; parasitología

INTRODUCTION

“The future of our homeland must be a future of men of science, it must be a future of men of thought, because it is precisely what we are sowing more; [...]”.⁽¹⁾ Dr. José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez's life and work deserve special attention because he is a leading figure of the Specialty of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology in Villa Clara Province due to his extraordinary labor, teaching, personal and administrative attributes and for his great humanistic projection in the exercise of his profession.

The fundamental value of this article lies in the fact that it offers the possibility of presenting the trajectory of an exceptional physician, still alive, both in the assistance and teaching spheres, of showing his work as a Specialist in Medical Microbiology and Parasitology and of highlighting his exemplary work, which constitutes an example to be followed by the new generations.

METHODS

It was carried out a documentary type of research that allowed an approach to the main events that occurred in the life of the Professor.

The following methods were used:

From the theoretical level:

-Historical-logical (it was used throughout the research to assess the chronological succession of the fundamental events occurred in his life).

Empirical methods:

-Documentary analysis (a review of scientific documents, his *curriculum vitae*, photos, awards and diplomas and his file and publications was carried out).

-Interview with the Professor under investigation.

DEVELOPMENT

On July 20th, 1945 in Cienfuegos, former Las Villas Province, in his own home, José Antonio was born, the only son of Antonio Rodríguez González and Carmen Rodríguez Ávalos. His father worked in the offices of the sugar mill “Hormiguero” (today “Espartaco”) and his mother was a teacher and pedagogue.^(2,3)

He studied primary school and up to the fourth year of high school at the private school “Los Hermanos Maristas” in Cienfuegos. His academic results were excellent.⁽³⁾

In March 1961, at the beginning of the Literacy Campaign in Cuba, he and his mother taught workers in a poor neighborhood of Cienfuegos to read and write in the evenings. On December 22 of that same year, the campaign was completed throughout the country and he was able to continue his fifth year of high school, in January 1962, at the Second Education Institute, because private schools had been intervened by the Revolutionary Government in July of the same year.^(2,3)

In October 1962, due to the country's need to train doctors, he decided to study Medicine at the "Victoria de Girón" Faculty of Medical Sciences in Havana. His studies actually began on January 3, 1963 due to a nationwide leveling process.^(2,3)

His second year of Medicine was spent in the Laboratories of the Faculty and he received classes in Microbiology, Pathological Anatomy, Pharmacology, Clinical Laboratory and X-Rays, among others. In his third year he studied Clinical Propedeutics at the National Hospital, from January to December 1965. The fourth year was dedicated to Internal Medicine, but interspersed with Surgical Specialties (such as Surgery) in the evenings. The first six months of the fifth year he rotated through the Pediatrics Specialty and the remaining six months through Gynecology and Obstetrics. He finished his career and started his sixth year as a vertical intern.⁽³⁾

From his third year of Medicine he joined, together with 15 other students, the group of assistant students of Microbiology. He was a student leader and gave practical classes in Microbiology, for two consecutive years, to 16 medical students of lower years.⁽³⁾

In those years the country was in need of Microbiology Specialists because new laboratories were built in the former six Cuban provinces and human resources were very limited. Therefore, of the 16 assistant students of Microbiology, 13 were selected, including José Antonio, plus three new colleagues, to begin the vertical internship of the Specialty. He did it at the National Center for Scientific Research (CENIC), where he received classes from distinguished professors of the country, such as Professor of Philosophy Gaspar García Galló, and a course for researchers.⁽³⁾

He made rotations at the Microbiology Laboratory of the "Manuel Fajardo" Military Hospital in Havana, which was directed by Dr. Alina Llops, and at the "William Soler" Pediatric Hospital. In December 1968 he graduated as a physician, continued his residency and began his professional life in the Tuberculosis Laboratories of the "Julio Trigo López" Hospital in Havana.^(2,3,4,5)

In July 1969 he moved, together with his first wife, Ofelia Magariños Montes Bravo, also a specialist in Microbiology, to the city of Santa Clara; he worked at the "Celestino Hernández Robau" University Hospital until October 1972, when he returned to Havana to complete some rotations, such as Virology. He completed his residency at the National Institute of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology in April 1975 and graduated as a First Degree Specialist in Medical Microbiology and Parasitology.^(2,3,4,5)

When he finished his studies, he returned to Santa Clara and worked at the Provincial Center of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology (CPHEM, Centro Provincial de Higiene, Epidemiología y Microbiología) of Las Villas until December 1990, where he was Chief of the Bacteriology Laboratory and inspector of the Provinces of Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus and Cienfuegos; for his dedication and professionalism he was promoted to Vice Director.^(2,3,4,5)

In 1975 he obtained the teaching category of Assistant Professor, which made him Assistant Professor of Microbiology at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Las

Villas. In 1988 he became an Assistant Professor and in 1998 he became Full Professor of the Specialty.^(2,4,5,6)

In the 80's, he participated in important research of national scope such as those related to the population circulation of the influenza virus, with the different serotypes of *Leptospira* and with the antimeningococcal vaccine. At present, he is an associate researcher at the Central University "Marta Abreu" of Las Villas for the study on the effectiveness of treatment with dermofural in angiological diseases.^(2,3,5,6)

On January 2nd, 1991, he started working at the "Arnaldo Milián Castro" University Clinical Surgical Hospital, a hospital that was inaugurated, and became the first Head of the Microbiology Department until April 2007, when he decided to resign from the position of his own accord.^(2,3,4,5)

He has been a member of the Scientific Council of the Hospital since its foundation and was its President until a ministerial resolution was received stating that the Director of the institution should be the President of the Council, so he remained as Secretary. He is the President of the teaching categories tribunal.^(2,3,5)

In the Specialty of Microbiology, since the 90's, he has been the President of the Court for the Specialty of I and II Grades (Figure 1).^(2,3,5)



Figure 1. Dr. José Antonio as Chairman of the Tribunal for the state examination of Dr. Adrián García Fernández in 2020

He fulfilled an international medical mission in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana from September 1992 to 1994.^(2,3,4,5)

In 2006 he achieved his Master's degree in infectious diseases and was in charge of this scientific training.^(2,4,5,6)

He is the main author of the book "General Elements of Microbiology and Parasitology", written in 2007 and dedicated, fundamentally, to the Licenciates in

Clinical Bioanalysis who were fulfilling medical mission in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.^(2,5)

In December 2013 he suffered an acute myocardial infarction; he recovered in six months and returned to work.⁽³⁾

He has more than 15 publications in national and international journals and belongs to the Reviewer Teams of the Journals "Acta Médica del Centro" and "Medicentro".⁽⁵⁾

Throughout his career he has received multiple awards and decorations for his outstanding career in the Medical Sciences and from the "Pedro Kourí" Institute for a lifetime devoted to Microbiology (Figures 2 and 3).^(2,5,6)

He has two daughters from his first marriage, two sons from his second marriage and one son from his third marriage, and he has six grandchildren.⁽³⁾

She retired in February 2022.⁽³⁾



Figure 2. Dr. José Antonio receives the 40th Anniversary Seal of the Scientific Societies of Health in the year 2023



Figure 3. Dr. Alina Choy Marrero, President of the Provincial Chapter of Microbiology; Dr. María de Lourdes Sánchez Álvarez, President of the Academic Committee of Microbiology; Dr. José Antonio Rodríguez Rodríguez, Professor of Microbiology; Dr. Neil Reyes Miranda, Director of the Provincial Center of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Microbiology

CONCLUSIONS

Doctor José Antonio is great in science and virtue and always pointed out, with true lessons of humanism in the work developed, the right path of the medical profession. With his teachings and his example he contributed to the formation of several generations of medical students and Microbiology Residents. He will always be remembered, even though he is no longer in the laboratories.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.