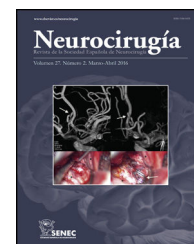




NEUROCIRUGÍA

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In Memoriam

Dr Máximo Poza y Poza

It is with great regret, affection and respect that we announce the death of Dr Máximo Poza y Poza, the last Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Neurocirugía* [Neurosurgery] on 9 November 2024 after a serious illness. During the last days of his life he was cared for at his home in Murcia, accompanied by his wife Carmina Cisneros and their children Ana Gabriela and Pablo, and by the presence, always in everyone's memory, of his daughter María. Máximo was born in Fuencaiente del Burgo (Soria) on 6 December 1932. His secondary schooling was at the Instituto Nacional de Enseñanza Media "Antonio Machado" in Soria. He then studied Medicine at Madrid's Universidad Complutense. He obtained his doctorate, with distinction, in Murcia. He did his medical residency at the Clínica de la Concepción - Fundación Jiménez Díaz (1959). During his specialisation (1960–1965), he worked at the Hospital Clínico de Madrid, where he was head of the ward, at the Centro Nacional de Especialidades Quirúrgicas de la Seguridad Social [Social Security National Centre for Surgical Specialties] (Madrid), and at the Newcastle General Hospital, United Kingdom (1962–1963). He also worked as an associate neurosurgeon at the Instituto de Ciencias Neurológicas [Institute of Neurological Sciences] in Madrid.

Dr Obrador, considered the "father" of Spanish Neurosurgery, promoted the development of neuro logical surgery in Spain by creating neurosurgical services in the "Ciudades Sanitarias" [Health Cities]. In 1970, a national selection process was held for Regional Consultants and Dr Poza obtained one of the positions. These department heads soon spread throughout Spain, providing broad coverage of the population that Dr Poza called the "Neurosurgery diaspora". The beginnings in Murcia were difficult due to the shortage of staff and equipment. Dr Valenciano joined the newly opened Regional Neurosurgery Service of Murcia. Dr Martínez-Lage came from Hospital La Paz. At first we lacked instruments and the first operations were performed with Dr Poza's own tools. The shortcomings were made up for by enthusiasm and dedication. Gradually, other doctors joined through the medical residency system and the equipment improved.

Dr Poza was a Consultant of the Regional Neurosurgery Service from 1970 to 2002. He performed more than 5000

operations on brain and spinal cord processes, including 536 intracranial aneurysms.

Before his transfer to Murcia, Máximo suffered a serious car accident, causing multiple fractures in his femurs and legs. This required several operations, rehabilitation and almost a year of forced rest. There is an anecdote that, while still admitted in the Instituto de Ciencias Neurológicas and in a wheelchair, he performed a trephine on a patient in a coma, saving his life.

During his tenure, he had several further stays abroad for training: microsurgery in Zurich (1970), stereotactic surgery in Umea, Stockholm, in 1980 and Berlin in 1985. He taught several doctoral courses in Murcia and at various Spanish universities and was a visiting professor at different centres in Latin America, Europe and the United States.

From 1973 to 2003, he served as a professor of neurosurgery at the University of Murcia's Faculty of Medicine, imparting his knowledge to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. From the beginning, he also organised training classes in Neurosurgery forward and operating theatre nurses, which were given by all of us doctors in the Department. With the help of Dr Valenciano, he organised clinical sessions in the afternoons aimed at Neuropsychiatrists from specialties that were still linked, which led to the dissemination of our activity in Murcia. Poza had a great interest in the training of our residents, and those of other specialties who rotated through our Department. He was the author of numerous publications in national and international journals, most with impact factor. He was also the sole author of the book "*Cirugía del sistema nervioso y del raquis Fundamentos*."

[Surgery of the nervous system and spine. Fundamentals], (Universidad de Murcia publications, 1993), as well as chapters in books on the speciality. Also important was his role as *author, reviewer, editor, and finally Director-Head* of "*Neurocirugía*" (official organ of the Sociedad Española y Sociedad Luso-Española de Neurocirugía (SLEN and SENE) [Spanish Society and Portuguese-Spanish Society of Neurosurgery]) (1996–2003).

His standing in the management of the Neurosurgery Department led to his appointment as *Managing Director of Hos-*

pital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca in Murcia (1979–1982), a position he held without abandoning his healthcare work. He also collaborated as Secretary and then President of the Spanish Society of Neurosurgery (Sociedad Luso-Española and Sociedad Española de Neurocirugía -SLEN and SENEC (1986–1997)). In 2006, the Spanish Society of Neurosurgical (SENC) awarded him the Society's Gold Medal.

Dr Poza served as President of the College of Physicians of Murcia. He was also Chair of the *Ethics Committees* of the *European Association of Neurosurgical Societies* (EANS) (1992–2003) and of the *World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies* (WFNS) (1991–2003). The “*ethical guidelines*” were published in almost all neurosurgical journals in the world.

He was a full member of the Real Academia de Medicina y Cirugía de Murcia [Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery of Murcia], later becoming President until his retirement in 2003.

Another aspect of his social life was his oath as a knight of a military order of Castile, being bestowed a sword of Toledo in a beautiful ceremony held in the Church of San Nicolás in Murcia. Under his direction, the Neurosurgery Department of Murcia developed numerous lines of research, including intracranial hypertension, CSF cytology, experimental surgery, involuntary movements, iatrogenic Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, various congenital anomalies and intramedullary stem cell transplantation.

Apart from the accident mentioned above, life tested his mettle on two more difficult occasions: the terrorist attack against his brother-in-law Gabriel Cisneros and the early death of his daughter María.

After his retirement, the hospital appointed him *Honorary Consultant*. His patients and colleagues alike appreciated him for both his professional and human qualities.

Maximo's arrival at his office at 8 in the morning, putting on his white coat, and his comments and opinions during the morning clinical session still keep alive the memories of his time in our department and of our affection and gratitude.

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