

REUE |

## In memoriam

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That May 4<sup>th</sup> I will never forget — I lost a colleague, a friend, and so much more. I didn't hear the phone ring; I didn't see the WhatsApp messages that had been sent to me. It was my sister, when she called, who told me: "Haven't you checked your phone?" "No, why?" "Paco Peinado has died." My heart sank. I looked at my phone — there was a missed call from the SUMMA medical director, and a WhatsApp from him at 7:32: "Call me, it's urgent." But no, nothing was urgent anymore. It was too late. Nothing would bring you back.

We met relatively late, because until we began doing research, we hadn't worked together. I knew of your work as a translator, because you helped us with many of the texts we sent out, and because colleagues who knew you back when you also worked extra shifts at the SUAP in Pozuelo told me about you. Your translator's talent probably came from that fondness you had for the British world — you always loved English culture, baroque music from England, and sharp British humor (I think we all knew your ironic style). Your daughters told me about your passion for medical language, remembering how you enjoyed Fernando Navarro's medical terminology dictionaries. You loved words! You reminded us of that every day on Facebook, posting a new word and its meaning from the RAE.

Perhaps you don't remember, but our first work together was at the Fifth Mediterranean Emergency Medicine Congress in Valencia (Spain) — a poster titled "Use of alternative devices for difficult airway in prehospital setting."<sup>1</sup> It had nothing to do with cardiac arrest (CA), which later would become the topic that most united us, but it was a good start.

And then came OHSCAR — blessed and cursed OHSCAR. Blessed because thanks to it we shared so many hours — of work, of joy, of travel, of publications — and cursed for the hours it stole from our families. Our first trip was close, to Bilbao (Basque Country, Spain), for the 2014 ERC Congress. Then came Prague. How much fun we had in Prague! I remember you stopping at old bookshops — antiques always caught your eye, as you often showed on your Facebook,

talking about "old gadgets," as you called them.

We got a taste for traveling after that and soon came the SEMES and CERCP congresses — closer and cheaper, so we hardly missed any. There was always some oral presentation or poster to take, so they'd cover our registration, though in the end, not even that was paid. This year, I didn't go to the SEMES Congress in Seville (Spain) — you weren't there. Our last SEMES Congress in Madrid was, and will always be, special to me. As was the last CERCP in Salamanca (Spain)— that truly was our last congress together.

Later came our papers, and I remember with special affection the first one we got published in *Resuscitation*: "Uncontrolled donation programs after out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. An estimation of potential donors."<sup>2</sup> If it hadn't been for you — your input, and above all, your translator's skill — it would have never been published. Then more would come, centered around what most united us — OHSCAR. Many hours collecting and analyzing data — sometimes difficult to coordinate — because you were tireless. Rarely a day went by when you weren't finishing a shift, first in Antracita, later in Pozuelo — not at the SUAP where you began, but at the 112 Emergency Center, where from your post you saved countless lives. Or working extra shifts, hearing the explosions of the bomb squad nearby — and if not, finishing a rural emergency shift (SAR), heading home with *churros* for breakfast.

I'll never forget the hours we spent listening to recordings from the SUMMA 112 Coordination Center (CCU), preparing training sessions on cardiac arrest detection and telephone-assisted CPR, of which you were a master. The other day, I gave that class again — but without you. Well, not really without you. You couldn't be missing, and as long as I give that lecture, you never will be fully gone. I played the recording of the telephone CPR call from the day of the *Filomena* storm — your calm voice, your encouragement, your way of keeping them doing compressions until my team arrived — you made it possible that when we got there, the nurse thought the patient wasn't in arrest. When we hooked

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up the monitor, he was in ventricular fibrillation — and he converted with the first shock. A 24-year-old who's still alive, without sequelae, thanks to you — like so many others you kept alive until help arrived.

I remember how we adapted and completed the Paris Fire Brigade's cardiac arrest detection algorithm<sup>3</sup> — where you gently corrected me: "Chema, not bocanadas but boqueadas, they're not smoking!" Always your humor. I'm still fighting to implement it at the CCU, because I know we'll make it possible for everyone there to detect cardiac arrest faster and save as many lives as you did.

You were a tireless fighter — for quality public health care, for improving whatever you could, for a fairer, fuller kind of medicine (you know what I mean). Maybe that's why your daughter Clara followed in your footsteps — not because you insisted, but because of what she saw in you. She told me recently: "I fondly remember studying during medical school surrounded by my father's old medical books, even using some of his damn anatomy atlases — dusty, but giving me the same headaches they must have given him as a student."

Clara also told me something you never did — that your wife and your college friends used to call you Dr. Jekyll. I would've teased you about that, of course. Yet I

never saw your Mr. Hyde side — and I doubt many did, if it even existed.

Maybe you did meet him when you battled with Atropos, because you, Francisco Alfonso Peinado Vallejo, fought her many times to keep her scissors from cutting the thread of life. But she was treacherous — she came for you in the very place where you'd beaten her so many times, because she couldn't forgive that. She came for you at your workplace, at the 112 Emergency Center in Madrid, in Pozuelo — the same place where just days before you'd snatched another life from her grasp. Damn her grudge.

As Violeta and Clara told me: "Even though our father was very private about his work, we would always end up hearing — from him or from his colleagues — proof of his great humanity, professionalism, and camaraderie." That was evident at your wake — attended by old and new colleagues, those arriving with their UMEs (Emergency Medical Units), their VIRs (Rapid Intervention Vehicles), and their UADs (Home Assistance Units). You were deeply loved in the service. And even at your farewell, you had to add your personal touch of humor — with a funeral home located next to a company called *GraciasPaco.com*. So perfectly you.

Well, dear Paco — you've certainly managed to ruin our May, and you did it thoroughly. I won't bother you anymore; you know how much we'll miss you. You were dearly appreciated not only by everyone at SUMMA but also by all your colleagues in OHSCAR and anyone who ever had the privilege of working with you. Rest in peace.

## REFERENCES

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