

In Memoriam

David Pascual Hernández



David Pascual Hernández was born in Tarrasa, in northeastern Spain, on January 31, 1972, as his father, a government employee, was assigned to that city at the time. He soon moved to Cáceres, in western Spain, where his family came from originally and where he grew up, showing a remarkable gift for sports and academic activities. He had a passion for basketball, among other things –he himself was a good player, and Juan Antonio San Epifanio, “Epi”, was his sports idol during his childhood and youth. For this reason, he was a F.C. Barcelona fan, a sentiment inherited by his children.

He had a vocation for medicine: by the age of 6 he declared, and knew, that he was going to become a doctor. He completed his medical studies brilliantly at the *Universidad de Navarra* and the *Clínica Universitaria de Navarra* in Spain between 1990 and 1996, participating actively in cultural and academic activities (he was a member of the class council). The faculty of medicine not only provided him with a sound medical education, but also with the person who, as time would tell, would probably be his greatest and best support: his wife, Eugenia.

He confirmed his academic brilliance by obtaining the third highest score among the medical school graduates who took the Spanish postgraduate qualifying exam for medical residency the same year he did. Without questioning it, he decided on cardiology as the specialty in which to develop his idea of medicine. To this end, he chose the Cardiology Service at *Hospital Gregorio Marañón* in Madrid, where he was a resident from 1998 to 2003. His work disappointed no one and, as could be expected, he completed his residency brilliantly. Rarely has a medical resident left such an important mark on both his fellow residents and on the staff as a whole, among whom, of course, I include myself. At this point, I wish to stress the fact that, throughout his residency, he showed a marked interest in clinical medicine, which he considered the key to health care and to which he devoted the greater part of his personal and professional efforts from the very first day. Given the combination of all these characteristics, he was offered the opportunity to join the Cardiology Service at *Hospital Gregorio Marañón*, a proposal that he accepted and to which he devoted himself with all the enthusiasm in the world and with the utmost dedication.

From the very first moment, he opted for the study and treatment of heart failure as his prime interest and, later on, for cardiac transplantation as well. For this reason, he joined the group of us working in that area at the time. I should mention that his enlistment in our ranks proved to be a highly important stimulus for all of us, and his approach to his work, with an extremely organized mind and ideas, provided a decisive

impetus to the consolidation of our group within the cardiology service during those years.

Speaking for myself, I can say that they were years in which I felt happy to be working side by side with David and the rest of the group. Nevertheless, they were years of hard work since getting a program of this type underway (database, organization of the outpatient office, inpatient care, etc.) involves highly intense dedication.

His professional interests, as could be expected in a young person with professional ambitions, were not limited exclusively to the care of patients. He also devoted a large part of his energies to research and to the dissemination of knowledge concerning heart failure. As a result of all this work, he produced numerous contributions to congresses on cardiology and was an author of a number of articles in cardiology journals, as well as reviews on heart failure in journals related to fields other than cardiology as part of his dissemination efforts. He had even undertaken the implementation of research protocols that were suspended because of his illness. More important than all of that was his work as an editor of the *“Manual de Insuficiencia Cardíaca. Diagnóstico y tratamiento de una patología en expansión”* (“Handbook on Heart Failure. Diagnosis and treatment of a disease on the rise”). Its conception and the fact that it was finally published were largely due to his determination, to his inestimable organizational endeavors, and to his intellectual engagement.

His activity in the hospital did not sap his desire to pursue his personal and intellectual concerns. His interest in the dissemination of medical knowledge led him to engage in an editorial activity that enabled the publication of several medical handbooks in addition to that mentioned above: *“Manual de Electrocardiografía. Bases para la interpretación de trazados electrocardiográficos”* (“Handbook on Electrocardiography. Bases for the interpretation of electrocardiographic tracings”), which he coauthored, and the *“Manual de Ecocardiografía. Indicaciones e interpretación en la práctica clínica”* (“Handbook on Echocardiography. Indications and interpretation in clinical practice”), to which he lent his skills as an editor.

Since 1997, he also worked in the CTO group, where he was deputy director for the past 6 years. He directed and coordinated the eighth edition of the *“Manual CTO de Medicina y Cirugía”* (“CTO Handbook on Medicine and Surgery”). In addition, he continued to work actively and enthusiastically at home until barely a week before his death, a circumstance that enabled him to remain in contact with medicine, his greatest passion, up to the last days of his life.

Unfortunately, all of David’s prospects on the human, intellectual, and professional level were abruptly severed in October 2005 with the diagnosis of the disease that, ultimately, put an end to his life. Nevertheless, a person like him did not fall apart. He fought to the end without giving up and was capable of withstanding the harshest therapies. When, at the beginning, the complete remission of his disease was achieved, he even returned to work as normal and devoted himself to making up for lost time: clinical care, outpatient visits, preparation of clinical care protocols, etc. And he continued to do so until he suffered the relapse that obliged him to give up his duties at the hospital definitively in order to commit himself, with the unconditional support of his family, especially his wife, Eugenia, and his two children, Miguel and Sofía, to a continuous battle to recover and to go on living until, sadly, he passed away on May 9, 2011. It must be said that he knew how to die with the same dignity with which he had lived. And that is how all of us who truly cared for him will remember him.

Rest in peace.

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