



Jesus Vaquero, MD, PhD, 1950–2020

Miguel A. Arraez¹ · Jesus Lafuente^{2,3,4} 

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At the age of 70 and after a long struggle with the sequelae of brain hemorrhage, COVID-19 denied the last opportunity of Prof. Jesus Vaquero to survive. He passed away on April 17, 2020. He had a spontaneous parietal bleeding last December, after he had confined himself in his office to prepare a special lecture to be delivered at the Spanish National Academy of Medicine and Surgery. The lecture was never given.

Jesus Vaquero, born right in the middle of the last century (1950), found his vocation as a physician and neuroscientist at the School of Medicine of the Complutense University (Madrid, Spain). In these early days, his initial work included observational studies about the effect of corticosteroids in traumatic spinal cord damage that over time became his major point of interest yielding unbeatable and pioneer experimental and clinical research. Puerta de Hierro Hospital in Madrid engaged him in 1974 as a resident in Neurological Surgery. The walls of this hospital—one of the most prestigious in the country—witnessed over almost 45 years the meteoric career of this bright physician that became the Associate Professor, received his PhD qualification (1977), and was appointed Full Professor in 1993 and later on the Chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at the aforementioned hospital.

Along with his neurosurgical activity, he developed a fruitful career as a researcher in Histology. A countless number of publications (several hundred), books, monographies, lectures, and direct supervision of many research projects credited him as one of most brilliant research neurosurgeons in the twenty-first century. The most remarkable aspect of his work was—as fingerprint of his legacy—the evidence of the potentiality of stem cells to restore the spinal cord after the dramatic consequences of traumatic damage. His publications have also proven the effect of this cell therapy in some conditions of acquired brain damage.

Last but not least, his capability to transmit knowledge and to teach, benefited hundreds of students, dozens of residents, and novel researchers. His natural sense of humor and way of making guests and visitors feel welcome showed him to be the lovely person and great physician who will be remembered with gratitude in the memory of the Spanish neurosurgical community.

Rest in Peace.

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✉ Jesus Lafuente
jlbspine@gmail.com

¹ Hospital Carlos Haya, Malaga, Spain

² Hospital del Sagrado Corazon, Barcelona, Spain

³ Clinica CIMA, Barcelona, Spain

⁴ Clinica Bofill, Girona, Spain