

José Miguel Ramos de Almeida (1930-2024): a tribute

José Miguel Ramos de Almeida (1930-2024): uma homenagem

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On June 24, 2024, at the age of 94, José Miguel Ramos de Almeida (JMRA) passed away peacefully. The field of pediatrics lost a remarkable and respected pediatrician. He was a teacher, a supportive mentor and a friend.

His lifelong excellence in the fields of culture, pediatric research, education, healthcare and advocacy is widely recognized among colleagues and the general public. His unparalleled contributions to individual lives, the community and society will always be remembered and paid forward for years to come. His keen sense of humor and humanity, his eloquence and his determination to spearhead novel avenues for understanding the link between science and humanities, will be missed by all he touched.

JMRA enjoyed a rich and varied medical career, with a special interest in Neonatology/Perinatology. He was an internationally recognized health visionary in practice standards, curriculum development and research. He received his medical degree from the Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade Clássica de Lisboa in 1954 and completed his pediatric residency at the Hospital de Santa Maria (HSM), linked to the same medical school.

After his pediatric residency, he continued his training in pediatrics at the Pediatrics Department of HSM, Lisbon. As a result of his exceptional profile and expertise, he was also invited to teach on pediatrics for students. He later received several scholarships, namely from the World Health Organization (WHO), and was chosen to receive training, mainly in intensive care in

prestigious hospitals in Europe and the United States (Toronto, Boston, Cambridge in Massachusetts and Britain, London, Oxford, Newcastle, etc.), establishing professional and personal contacts with prestigious pediatricians all over the world.

Teaching students was the first step in a brilliant academic career, which continued in another university in Lisbon (Universidade Nova de Lisboa/UNL - Faculdade de Ciências Médicas) following the awarding of his doctorate (PhD) (1987) with research on *"Adolescence and Motherhood"*. Following this, he became an associate professor (1991) before reaching the position of full professor/chair (1993).

During a period of transition, JMRA applied for another position as head of the department of Neonatology at the Maternidade Dr. Alfredo da Costa (MAC) in Lisbon, which is attached to the aforementioned UNL. Most of his hospital career was therefore spent in Lisbon at HSM and MAC.

To emphasize his special interest in medical education and the need for a human relationship between patient, family and the clinician, he supported the idea that *"the educator should give each medical trainee/student (in a simulated scenario) the opportunity to experience the fears and feelings of the actual patient who is being hospitalized"*. As a matter of fact, JMRA was a master of teaching and education in medicine, working closely with medical students, pediatric residents and neonatology trainees. At the hospital, his inpatient rounds were legendary among subspecialty residents.

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He was invited to lead and work alongside a range of committees, scientific societies and groups devoted to public health, health organization, human rights, medical education, professional medical issues, ethics, etc. Of particular note was the fact that he was elected president of the Sociedade Portuguesa de Pediatria/SPP (1979-1981), honorary member of Academia Portuguesa de Medicina, member of the Conselho Técnico do Instituto de Apoio à Criança - IAC (Technical Council of the Child Support Institute) and member of the Conselho Disciplinar da Ordem dos Médicos (Disciplinary Board of the Portuguese Medical Council). Among other distinctions, he was awarded the "Memorial Arce Sanchez Villares (2000)" Prize by the Sociedad de Pediatría de Asturias, Cantabria y Castilla y Leon.

It was always pleasant to talk with him about a range of topics. His conversations were enjoyable and offered passionate messages beyond medicine, reflecting an extraordinary culture in different fields.

JMRA was also a passionate thinker, a highly regarded writer and an avid reader.

As a guest speaker, he gave more than 300 speeches/lectures/conferences at scientific events and was the author of more than 150 peer-reviewed publications (national and international papers) in scientific journals. At times, he expressed criticism and disagreement with

less-accurate published data through the "Letters to the Editors" section.

His spirit of intelligent citizenship also led him to write opinion articles with important statements devoted to the general public on critical analysis, pedagogy, democracy, politics, history, art, sociology, personal clinical experience, etc.

He published seven books related to some of the aforementioned topics. Among these seven books, three of them are particularly noteworthy: "*Do Sótão das Memórias*", "*Vício de Pensar*" and "*Camuflado*". Incorporating biographical data and important content on Science and Humanities, they carry useful ideas for medical students and new generations facing the future.

In conclusion, José Miguel Ramos de Almeida truly left an important legacy. He was a prestigious pediatrician, an academic and an internationally recognized health visionary in standards in pediatric practice, curriculum development and research. The memory of his many contributions will be cherished.

Our heartfelt thoughts and sympathies are with JMRA's family, friends and colleagues during this difficult time. He will be dearly missed. I shall miss him as a friend and a colleague, for whom I retain the greatest respect and admiration.