

A look to the past

Rubio-Donnadieu Francisco 

Priority Epilepsy Program. National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery Manuel Velasco Suárez

Correspondence

Francisco Rubio Donnadieu. Priority Epilepsy Program. National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery Manuel Velasco Suárez

 jetzabel_f@hotmail.com

It is always interesting to look into the past. Memory, as Ortega y Gasset said, is an impulse that man needs to launch himself into the future.

In chronicling the past, present, and future of Clinical Neurology in Mexico and in the National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery, I have to remember that in 1964 the then National Hospital of Neurology and Neurosurgery was inaugurated without having organized a Clinical Neurology Service. The decision to create the Neurology Service did not come until 4 years later.

In 1961, upon my return to Mexico, after 3 years of specialization in clinical neurology abroad and having completed the previous 3 years of specialization in Internal Medicine and Nutrition, I was invited by Dr. Manuel Velasco Suarez to an interview. The only thing we achieved was a distancing in our criteria for starting a Clinical Neurology Service. In addition to the care of neurological patients, we obtained training for Mexican neurologists, with postgraduate recognition from the UNAM, after 3 years of residency, with clinical assistance and research in neurosciences and basic sciences.

It was not until 1968 that Dr. Manuel Velasco Suárez invited me to organize the new Neurology Service of what would later become the new National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery.

The recognition of Institutional Clinical Neurology took place in 1961, when, with the support of Dr. Bernardo Sepúlveda, at that time Medical Director of the Mexican Institute of Social Security, the first Clinical Neurology Service was created under the direction of Dr. Julio Hernandez Peniche with the collaboration of Dr. Juvencio Robles, Dr. Hernandez Vera, and myself. I must remember that when the first service was organized at the Hospital de la Raza, it was the first Resident Dr. Juan Martinez Mata, who at the end of his residency became the first Neurologist trained in Mexico. In 1964, at the University Hospital José Eleuterio González in Monterrey, the Clinical Neurology Service was organized, independent from the Neurosurgery Service, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Ricardo Rangel. Shortly after, at the IMSS Medical Center, also on the initiative of Master B. Sepúlveda, another clinical neurology service was created under the direction of Dr. Luis Lombardo.

The Neurologists who were already working in Mexico during the period 1955-1961 had trained abroad, some of us having done a Residency in Internal Medicine before the Residency in Neurology in different countries. We were 9 Clinical Neurologists, the founders of the Mexican Council of Neurology: Julio Hernández Peniche, Luis Lombardo, Ladislao Olivares, Felipe Valle, José Eduardo San Esteban, Ricardo Rangel,

Recaredo Rodríguez, Federico de la Peña and Francisco Rubio Donnadieu.

After nearly a year of friendly and cordial meetings, we formalized the creation of the Mexican Council of Neurology before a public notary in 1972. The Council was the basis for the organization of the Mexican Academy of Neurology in 1977. For reasons that I have never understood, the first President of the Council was myself. I should add that the first decision of the Council was the certification of our teachers, most of whom taught, for historical reasons, Neuropsychiatry. Another event of great importance for the development of Neurology in Mexico was the organization in 1975 of the IV Pan-American Congress of Neurology, which was attended by more than 1000 participants from all over the American continent, as well as from Europe.

The work plan, both in the Neurology Service of the Hospital of la Raza and in the then Neurology Hospital, was carried out by Julio Hernandez Peniche and myself, considering three basic areas: academic, clinical research, and medical assistance, according to the principles of conduct of the so-called Esculapia Authority, which has 3 characteristics that give it strength: Wisdom, Moral and Charisma.

The first, wisdom, derives from experience and knowledge, which confer authority; it has a personal character. This type of character advises and counsels but does not command.

The second moral quality of the "Sculapia Authority" comes from the ethics of medical practice. Specifically, the "Sculapia Authority" is able to direct because its actions are good and right. Its action, from the social point of view, must be correct, and it must be beneficial from the individual point of view. This is the main characteristic of medicine. No other profession equals it.

The third characteristic of medical authority is charisma, which has its basis in religious beliefs and medicine. Faced with the threat of death and the impossibility for the patient to evaluate the doctor's wisdom, he/she has to be influenced by the medical charisma, which confers its priestly role, often arbitrary, as are life and death.

The god Asclepios, like all parents, wanted his daughters (Panacea: Goddess of all healing, and Hygieia: Goddess of prevention) to work harmoniously, but it happened to him what happens to most families: the children compete more than collaborate. If Hygieia had been successful, Panacea

would have had nothing to do. Hygieia said, "If you eat too much, drink too much, smoke too much, or fornicate too much, you will fall into the hands of my sister Panacea and her accomplices, the doctors."

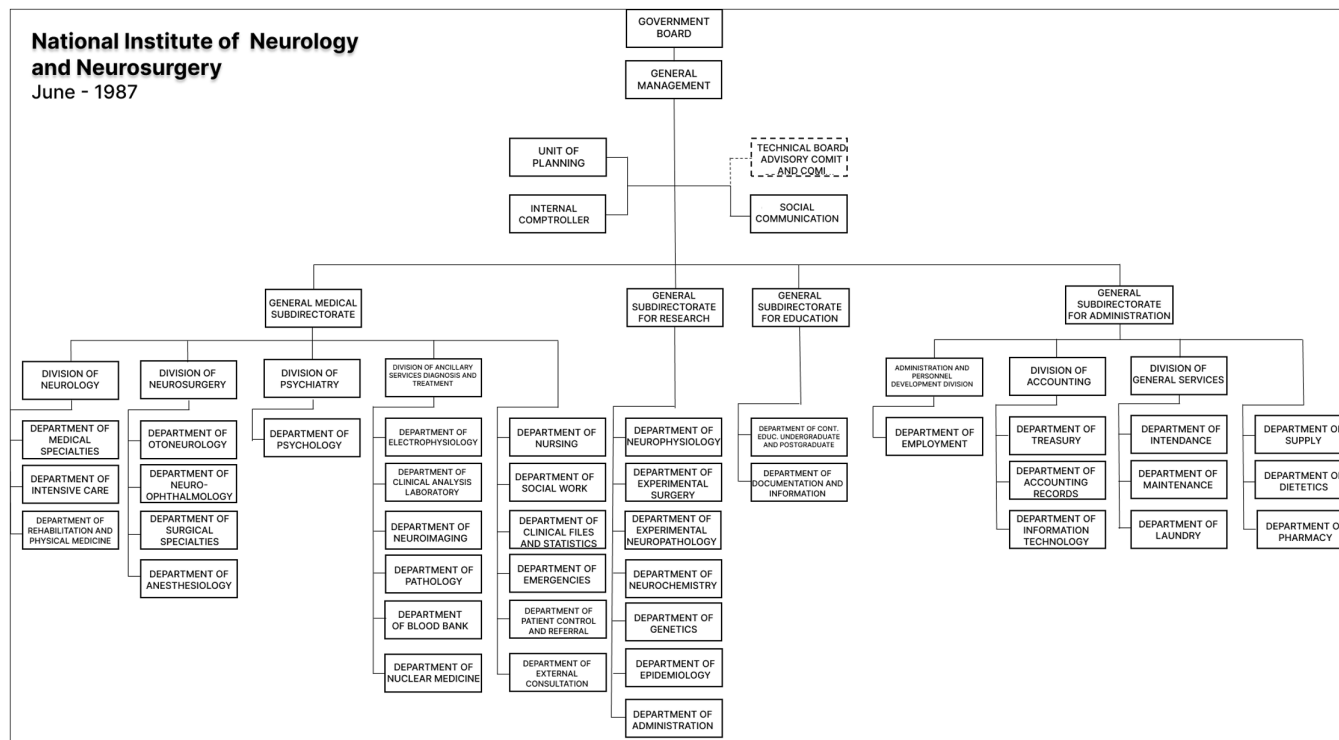
The National Institutes of Health created the Subsector in January 1983, which integrated our National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery. Since then, the Institute has collaborated closely with the Institutes of Cardiology, Nutrition, Cancerology, Psychiatry, Respiratory Diseases, Pediatrics, Perinatology, Public Health, and the Hospital of Mexico.

As part of the Ministry of Health's Sectorization Program, the Institute worked with groups like IMSS, ISSSTE, DIF, UNAM, IPN, and the Medical Services of the Federal District Department on projects like the Cysticercosis and Epilepsy Priority Programs, which were run by our institution.

I must emphasize that thanks to the support of Dr. Rafael Méndez, Coordinator of the National Institutes of Health, my teacher, excellent pharmacologist, and great friend, it was possible to restructure our Institute during the time that I was the General Director. Thus, after 3 years, with the supervision of the Board of Governors, 4 General Sub-Directorates, 7 Divisions, and 39 Departments were formed, as well as a School of Neurological and Neurosurgical Nursing, with the recognition of the Postgraduate of the UNAM.

Finally, I would like to highlight the national and international recognition of the activities of the Clinical Neurology Service of our Institute: in Mexico, the Clinical and Basic Neurosciences were formed, thanks to the organization in 1937, by Drs. Dionisio Nieto, Isaac Castro, and other great masters of the Mexican Society of Neurology and Psychiatry, which preceded by several years the Neuroscientific Societies that we know today.

I wanted to know this historical background by inviting my teachers and friends to dinner: Dionisio Nieto, Isaac Costero, and Rafael Méndez, who cooperated for dinner with three bottles of Ribera del Duero. They first talked about their background in the "Residencia" at the University of Madrid, where they met Dalí, García Lorca, Buñuel, and many others; later, the Civil War forced them to take refuge in Mexico. With their knowledge in their areas of Neurosciences that I took advantage of, and with the help of the products of the Ribera del Duero, I compared the development of Mexican Neurology in the 80 years before the dinner, which they considered very positive, and that (needless to say), the



Clinical Neurology Service of the INN had much to do with it! I collaborated with this distinction (national and international) through the Recognition of the International League of Epilepsy (ILAE) during the Celebration of the Centenary of the Journal EPILEPSIA that took place in Budapest, where a GOLD Medal was awarded to the authors of the most cited article during the 100 years of the Journal EPILEPSIA,

1981; 22:489-501, "Commission on Classification and Terminology of Epileptic Seizures." Over the course of three years, videos of epileptic seizures recorded in Epilepsy Clinics of Neurology Services of six countries, including Mexico (INNAC), were studied. The representative of INNAC from Mexico was given the GOLD Medal; they were the only ones to make it through the Commission (F.R.D.).

Referencias

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Artículo sin conflicto de interés

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