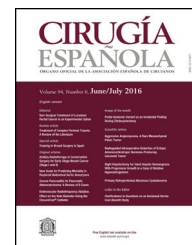




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Obituary

Dr. Eduardo Jaurrieta Mas (1947-2020)



On March 4, 2020, Dr. Eduardo Jaurrieta Mas, undoubtedly an icon of Catalan and Spanish surgery, passed away in his hometown of Barcelona. He was born on December 28, 1947 and graduated from the Medical College of Barcelona in 1971. After his degree, he completed his internship at the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau.

He decided to become a surgeon and completed his training as a resident doctor, initially in the General Surgery Unit of the Hospital Vall d'Hebron directed by Dr. Gómez Pérez, and later in the General Surgery 'B' Unit at the Hospital Universitari de Bellvitge Princesps d'Espanya, directed by Dr. A. Sitges Creus. He obtained the title of specialist in 1976 and received his doctorate in 1983 from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. At the university level, he was an associate professor, full professor and finally became Professor of Surgery at the University of Barcelona in 1996.

In 2003, he was appointed Medical Director of the Bellvitge Hospital, and in 2007 he left the hospital to become deputy of professional affairs management of the Catalan Institute of Health.

Going back to his hospital career, in 1991, at the Hospital Universitari de Bellvitge, the two General Surgery Services were unified and Dr. Jaurrieta, then the clinical director, was appointed Head of the General and Digestive Surgery Service. Thus, he took on the difficult challenge of integrating two departments with different histories and characteristics, which required creative cohesion. Dr. Jaurrieta worked intensively to make the unification of the 2 departments as successful as possible, so that surgeons could work together as a single service that would grow and renew itself as solidly as

possible. This management function of such a large and complex structure, with a maddening day-to-day activity in which the clinical-political-personal balance was worthy of a skilled juggler, entailed a very high price for Eduardo: having to sacrifice an important part of both his activity as a surgeon as well as his personal life.

One aspect to be highlighted in the department's work dynamics was the dedication of the divisions to specific pathologies by organ/system in order to obtain better results, especially for the treatment of neoplastic and complex diseases. All the surgeons accepted this organizational framework, which unified them, although not without difficulties. However, the persistence and good judgment in the decisions that Dr. Jaurrieta made and his close work with his collaborators consolidated the department into a great, modern, structured service. At that time, he had initiated a journey that led to the general surgery service being highly prestigious service today. One of the tools he used for group work and cohesion was a calculated increase in staff. Surgeons were incorporated who helped bring about a qualitative change to this new structure, boosting the different clinical units and supporting their leaders. Dr. Jaurrieta always looked before he leapt. His strategy included creating the group of emergency surgeons, which I am proud to have been part of. It was a radical change in 1992. The activities in the emergency department then did not follow a common thread, and if we consider that around 50% of the admissions to the department were urgent and that every day there were a significant number of urgent surgeries, many of them complex, the creation of a group of surgeons dedicated to emergencies created more uniformity in treatments, favored the development of protocols, and promoted the evolution of clinical management towards more modern approaches. Eduardo's enthusiasm in this new project was very stimulating for all of us. We felt his energy and he closely supervised our actions and results. Our department was the result of all this effort. It was more than just as a workplace — it was something we wanted for ourselves.

Dr. Jaurrieta was an excellent clinician, with a special instinct, scientific knowledge, up-to-date understanding of medical-surgical advances, a capacity for synthesis and a

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global vision of the patient, all of which were the foundation for his success as a surgeon. Eduardo was a special surgeon. He was, as we would say in Spanish, 'all terrain'. Another characteristic that stood out about him was his concern for patients, his humanity and his close relationship with patients and their families. Eduardo would be apprehensive during the initial postoperative days until he saw that everything was on the right track.

'No complications' was always one of the goals that he emphasized the most. He transmitted to us the belief that this is one of the most important points of clinical activity. It was a pleasure to see him operate, and it was by his example where the younger ones learned the trade. While we were fortunate to have him as a boss, we missed having him in the OR, although he always remained faithful to his clinical principles.

He was also concerned with the formation, creation and transmission of knowledge. Eduardo was a very approachable boss for surgeons and residents. He was an understanding and generous person, although at the same time very demanding.

Beyond his prestige as a pioneer of liver transplantation carried out in 1984, Eduardo Jaurieta was a charismatic leader whose drive motivated his collaborators. His constant search for improvement in surgery results in tune with innovation made him a transformative leader in his workplace, as well as

an example to be followed by many other professionals from other hospitals. True to his convictions, he dedicated his career exclusively to public healthcare, constantly defending a more transparent and fair system.

Momentum, enthusiasm, strategy-planning, future vision, rational interest in the development of surgery in all of its facets and contexts, decision, determination, fighting spirit, personal disinterest — this is how he lived his leadership and his professional role. In my opinion, it is thanks to people like Eduardo that our national healthcare system has achieved the accomplishments it has.

Just as I wrote to him in the dedication of my doctoral thesis that he directed, I remain enormously convinced that "... his manner of being, working and his great generosity are the model of man who deserves the highest respect."

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