

Professor Sebastião de Almeida Prado Sampaio*

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On October 19th, 2008, Prof. Sebastião de Almeida Prado Sampaio passed away, opening an irreparable vacuum in Brazilian and International Dermatology. His physical loss will not interfere with his spiritual survival among his colleagues in the specialty, who considered him a remarkable and unforgettable symbol of leadership. Prof. Sampaio combined to his technical skills a unique intelligence, a special clinical tirocinium and unconditional dedication to his work. This combination of qualities rendered him a very special physician and professor.

Prof. Sampaio was born in the city of Casa Branca, in the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1919. He received his academic degree in Medicine at the University of Sao Paulo Medical School in 1943, and started as a volunteer physician at the Dermatology Clinic under the supervision of Prof. Aguiar Pupo, the chairman of Dermatology at that time. He became an effective assistant physician in 1946. In 1950, after presenting his doctoral thesis on lupus erythematosus, an unknown disease at that time, he was promoted to the position of assistant professor at the Department of Dermatology, University of Sao Paulo Medical School.

In 1951, Prof. Sampaio departed to the United States to work with Prof. Paul O'Leary at the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, one of the referral medical centers of the world, to improve his medical skills.

In 1960, he became the chairman of the Department of Dermatology, University of Sao Paulo Medical School, and became the leader and pioneer of the modern Dermatology in that institution. Combining his worldwide experience and personal feeling, Prof. Sampaio started the transition of traditional, descriptive (so called morphology of the skin) specialty to the modern, dynamic dermatology that united basic science concepts to the understanding of physiopathology and to the development of diagnostic methods and therapy of skin diseases.



Eminent histopathologist, Prof. Sampaio spread among his disciples the importance of this subspecialty of Dermatology. He introduced daily clinical discussions which resulted in great profit to professors and students. He also stimulated his collaborators and students to attend national and international scientific meetings.

As a Professor, Dr. Sampaio contributed to the graduation of more than 300 Brazilian and foreign physicians. At least 20 out of these reached relevant academic positions in or outside the country. He was an inflexible, tough, ethical and watchful educator, always observing with care the way his students addressed the patients and conducted the cases.

Prof. Sampaio's scientific production is expressed in more than 120 national and international publications. He left prominent contributions to the treatment of paracoccidioidomycosis with amphotericin B and standardization of the guidelines for therapy of this disease. He developed an interesting and still cur-

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rent method for amphotericin B intravenous infusion, by simultaneously adding hydrocortisone and occasional dipirone, therefore minimizing adverse effects of the drug. Moreover, he showed the efficacy of amphotericin B in the mucous, refractory form of mucocutaneous leishmaniasis, which is associated to high morbidity and resistance to regular antimonials. Prof. Sampaio was also one of the first physicians to be involved in the clinical trials for imidazolic antifungal agents in superficial and deep mycosis.

In the clinical field, Prof. Sampaio described a clinical maneuver that was named in Brazil as Sampaio's signal, very useful in detecting pseudo pelade of Brocq. This sign is characterized by the presence of a gelatinous substance on the bulbar portion of the pull out hair.

Beyond the relevant scientific contributions, Prof. Sampaio, who was always in contact with the world-wide dermatologic expertise centers, initiated many technical innovations in his department, which achieved high levels of excellence in the dermatologic context.

Prof. Sampaio always had an intense participation at the Brazilian Society of Dermatology and other international societies. For many years he had been member of the maximum committee of the specialty, the International Committee of Dermatology.

He established a State branch in São Paulo for the Brazilian Society of Dermatology, the Brazilian Society of Dermatologic Surgery and Brazilian Society of Dermatopathology.

As a scientific visionary, in 1986 Prof. Sampaio started with Prof. Luis Diaz, at that time the chief of the Immunodermatology Laboratory of Johns Hopkins Medical Institute, the cooperative group on Fogo Selvagem research. The purpose of this group was to investigate this peculiar auto-immune disease, so prevalent in Brazil. This group has been working for more than 20 years, and published relevant papers that included significant findings in the etiology of this intriguing disease.

Although facing a severe disease, Prof. Sampaio actively took part in dermatologic projects and scientific meetings. His last lecture was on September 7th 2008, at the opening session of the Brazilian Congress of Dermatology during his 88th birthday, forty-two days before his death. On that day, he gave his lecture with full energy, and talked about his 60-year experience in treating acne and 26-year personal experience utilizing isotretinoin in approximately 5000 patients.

His final lesson was not only about Dermatology, but about life. He showed an uncommon, almost supernatural courage to face a harsh, aggressive disease, the imminent death and death itself. This inner strength increased even more the influence of his legacy on younger generations.

The 6,000 Brazilian dermatologists lost a hero and a leader. Fortunately, there are many followers and professors in our country that may continue Prof. Sampaio's pathway, always seeking for innovation and improvement of our specialty. □