



Obituary

Margarete Suñé Mattevi (1941-2013) and the dynamics of chromosome changes



Life History

Margarete Suñé Mattevi's life history is briefly summarized on Table 1. She was born on October 17, 1941 in Bagé, RS, in the family of well-known farmers, but in 1960 she moved to Porto Alegre to attend the Biological Sciences Course at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. At that time I was working in several aspects of human genetics, and she came to our laboratory, still as an undergraduate student, in 1962. I had advertised the need to replace a collaborator at the scientific initiation level, and in the moment that she started to use a pipette I was sure that I had profited with the change. It is like football, at the first contact with the ball you can immediately know if the player is or is not good!

Shortly after her graduation she was admitted to our Department, obtaining the Master's degree in 1970, and the Ph.D. degree in 1974. Along the years she developed a very fruitful academic career, that included the coordination of our Post-Graduate Program in 1986/89 and 1993/94. She was also very active in advisory committees or similar roles for CNPq, FAPERGS and FINEP. In 1992 she was elected for the Governing Board of the Brazilian Society of Genetics, a post held until 1994. In 1995 she formally retired from UFRGS, but remained in the institution, as an Invited Collaborator, until 2007.

In 2001 she was invited and accepted to work at the Brazilian Lutheran University (ULBRA), organizing there a new group of research, and working in this institution until her retirement, in 2011. Two years afterwards she was diagnosed as having a lung cancer and died of complications from it in December 26 of 2013.

Research

Human cytogenetics really started after the seminal development of the hypotonic technique devised by Tjio and Levan (1956). I went to Oxford, UK, in 1961 to learn how to use it, and Margarete was responsible for the full establishment of it in our laboratory. Her Master's degree was obtained investigating patients with gonadal dysgenesis (Mattevi *et al.*, 1971), and the Ph.D. studying the cytogenetics of senescence changes (Mattevi and Salzano, 1975a,b). Her interest in human cytogenetics remained until 2004, but beginning in the 1980's she decided to turn to animal cytogenetics, working with cattle (example, Moraes *et al.*, 1987) and especially rodents. She dedicated to these and other organisms studies that involved all her life, organizing a very successful team of research. In 2010 her laboratory at ULBRA had a stock of nothing less than 4,000 tissues and/or DNAs of small mammals including rodents, marsupials, bats, tayassuidae, primates and other taxa, from 150 places in the Amazon, Cerrado, Caatinga, Atlantic Forest, Araucaria Forests, and southern savannas. Highly selected examples of these studies are Nagamachi *et al.* (1997), Carvalho *et al.* (2002), and Bonvicino *et al.* (2009), but a full list of her articles are available at the Lattes Platform. They include 78 full research articles and five book chapters.

Family Life, Personality

Margarete was the fourth child in a sibship of five. Her sibs included Carmen, an engineer, Jaime, farmer, Jandira, entrepreneur, and João Fausto, veterinarian. She was married to João and had two daughters. The first, Vanessa, is a highly successful Genetics Adjunct Professor at Porto Alegre's Federal University of Health Sciences (UFCSPA). People say that she was exposed to genetics *in utero*, when Margarete, pregnant, came to work in our Department! The other daughter, Betina, is a medical doctor. Vanessa has a 4-year-old daughter, Heloisa, who was one of Margarete's delight at the end of her life.

Margarete had a wonderful personality was deeply involved with undergraduate and graduate students, laboratory, and administrative personnel. Her death created a lacuna difficult to be filled, and she will always be remembered by those who had the privilege of knowing her personally or through her papers.

Table 1 - Main events related to the life of Margarete Suñé Mattevi.

Year	Event
1941	Born in Bagé, RS on October 17, the daughter of Jaime Suñé Filho, a farmer, and Lisbela Vieira Suñé.
1963	Graduated in Biological Sciences at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).
1964	Admittance at the Genetics Department, Biosciences Institute, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS
1970	Master in Genetics and Molecular Biology, UFRGS.
1974	Ph.D. in Genetics and Molecular Biology, UFRGS.
1984	Free Docent, UFRGS.
1986/89, 1993/94	Coordinator, Post-Graduate Program in Genetics and Molecular Biology, UFRGS.
1991/93	Member of the Advising Committee, National Council of Research and Development (CNPq).
1992/93	Member of CNPq's Central Coordination Committee, Advising Committees (CCCA).
1992/94	Member of the Governing Board, Brazilian Society of Genetics (SBG).
1993/96	Member, Advisory Committee, Rio Grande do Sul State.
2006	Foundation for the Development of Sciences (FAPERGS).
1995	Formal retirement from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, remaining there, however, as an Invited Collaborator, until 2007.
2001	Admittance, by invitation, in the Brazilian Lutheran University (ULBRA).
2002	Research Coordinator, ULBRA.
2011	Retirement from ULBRA.
2013	Died on December 26, due to cancer.

References

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