

**Dr. Emil Sabbaga (10/16/1926 - 03/04/2016)**

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Dr. Emil Sabbaga, a great physician and an exemplary human being, whom I had the privilege of knowing since 1965, died on March 4, 2016.

I met him when I was a resident in internal medicine and he, together with Prof. J. Geraldo de Campos Freire and members of the Urological Clinic of the University of São Paulo Medical School Hospital - HCFMUSP, performed the first kidney transplant in Brazil and Latin America, on January 21, 1965. In that year, they successfully did three more cases, thus starting renal transplant here.

Dr. Emil was very active in his medical practice and education in nephrology, besides heading the kidney transplant activities. Every Wednesday there was a meeting to discuss cases and decide upon treatments; soon after, the whole team went out for pizza in the corner of João Moura Street and Rebouças Avenue.

The limitations were many; in immunology, there was only the ABO system. Immunosuppression was done with steroids, azathioprine and Actinomycin C. In the early days after the transplant the

renal graft was irradiated. All novelties were brought by Dr. Emil, who introduced the drainage of the thoracic duct, the manufacturing of thymatic antiglobulin; the drained lymph was injected into horses from the Butantan Institute and the serum was prepared in the old ISA Laboratory, whose scientific director was Professor Oswaldo Ramos, a close friend of Dr. Emil's. Endolymphatic irradiation was also started as an immunosuppressive measure. In 1968, the team published in the journal of the Medical Association, the first 15 cases of renal homograft from the University of São Paulo.

In 1970, Dr. Emil and Prof. Campos Freire created an area in the Urology department, with two nurses, a hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis room and a laboratory for specific clinical analysis for the Renal Transplant Unit (RTU), headed by Dr. Emil.

Some considerations on Dr. Emil: born in São Paulo/SP, on October 16, 1926; married to Mrs. Glaucia Sabbaga, with whom he had three children. He graduated in Medicine from the Medical

School of the University of São Paulo - FMUSP in 1951, and was one of the first residents of the Internal Medicine Department at the University Hospital. In the early 1960s, he took an internship in Boston, in the department of Professor John P. Merrill, at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital - Harvard Medical School; where in 1954, they successfully performed the first kidney transplant. He worked there in nephrology, kidney transplantation, peritoneal dialysis and hemodialysis for one year.

He did his doctoral thesis in 1972, with the theme "One hundred cases of kidney transplantation" and in 1988 defended the thesis for Senior Associate Professor of Nephrology, with the theme "1000 kidney transplant cases."

Founder and president of several medical societies: Brazilian Society of Nephrology, Latin American Society of Transplantation and the Brazilian Association of Organ Transplantation.

Along with the Neurology Department, he created the concept of brain death at the University of São Paulo Teaching Hospital, a concept that only years later was acknowledged by the Federal Board of Medicine.

He organized a very efficient organ collection system at the Kidney Transplant Unit (UTR), under Dr. Flávio Jota de Paula. This system was taken to the private care industry, leading to the creation of the Transplant Center of the State's Secretariat of Healthcare of São Paulo in 1997.

In the University Hospital he was seen as being very strict, quarrelsome and a true terror for the residents. In 1965, I met his other affective side: on "feast days" he would invite me to go to his father's or his father-in-law's home, as if I were a family member. At the end of each residency program he would invite his residents for feijoada in your home and at the end of every year, he invited his assistants and their families to dinner. He was very strict in medical rounds and meetings, not accepting mistakes. He cared for the training of his team, and sent many of his team members to study abroad.

Dr. Emil was a great scholar; after knowing him for such long time, I consider him the best nephrologist and clinician I have ever met. He attended all nephrology and transplantation conventions; he subscribed to the most prestigious journals of these disciplines and had an above average intelligence. Moreover, he had great general knowledge, always reading new books of various subjects. He knew much about soccer - being a huge Corinthians fan.

Other traits of Dr. Emil's deserve comment: he was the head of a medical service for employees of

Caboclo Coffee and Union Sugar and their families, in the Mooca district, where there were two doctors, two dentists, three social workers and a group of specialists. This was an embryo of private medical care; he worked there from 1 pm to 3 pm. After this time, he saw patients in his private office at Av. Brigadeiro Luis Antonio, 3333. His relationship with his patients was simply incredible, they saw him as a divine being. I bear witness to this fact because when he retired, in late 2014, he referred his patients to me, with their medical records.

The notes he wrote in his patients' records could become a textbook in internal medicine. He made bold treatment decisions, based on the latest publications or on data presented in the most recent conventions, and he was very concerned with his patients' family and personal information. He diagnosed diseases without the laboratory resources that we have today and was much concerned with kidney donors, writing down their information on red ink.

On 10/16/2006, he turned 70 and retired from his activities at the University Hospital. On that day, we unveiled a plaque at the Kidney Transplant Unit - UTR with the following words: "Professor Emil Sabbaga - From all who had their lives prolonged. From all who gained from your conviviality, tenacity, knowledge and dedication. Thank you very much, from you friends at the Kidney Transplant Unit of the Urology Department".

Even after retiring from the University Hospital, he continued with his medical activities in the Oswaldo Cruz German Hospital and in his private practice. At the Oswaldo Cruz German Hospital, he participated in all the committees related to organ transplantation and dialysis, distributing numerous advices.

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