

“The past is not dead, it isn’t even past.”

“O passado não está morto, ele sequer é passado.”

RENATO MIRANDA DE MELO¹ 

Although late, I was knocked down after reading the obituary of two medical journals about the passing of Professor Robert Bendavid last September. He was one of the most prominent surgeons with regard to inguinal hernia repair, and recognized as the most prolific writer of the clinical staff at Shouldice Hospital in Canada. I do not know the circumstances that led to his death, so premature, but this fact caused great commotion in the international surgical community. I confess that, since then, I have suffered an indigestible mourning...

At the end of 1996, by fax, I scheduled a visit to the Shouldice Hospital with him, to clarify some doubts “in loco” and discuss some points, in view of my great sympathy for the technique developed there, even after having read, read again and underlined its chapter in the treatise on hernias, by professors Nyhus and Condon. In May of the following year, I was arriving at Thornhill for a two-day visit to the surgical theaters of that hospital. Unfortunately, he cannot be with us at that moment, but I was received by Dr. Earle Byrnes Shouldice (son of the founder) and Dr. Michael Alexander, with whom I attended several and clarifying procedures, solving all my doubts. I just didn’t adopt the four suture lines nor the stainless steel of the original technique, but I assimilated all the principles of the proposal.

Since then, this has been the gold standard in the treatment of patients who come to me with primary inguinal hernia, reserving prosthetic repair as a

second option, once all the possibilities of performing the Canadian procedure have been exhausted. I have written and made some lectures on the topic, convinced that I am offering colleagues who read or assist me, an approach in accordance with the etiopathogenesis and pathophysiology of the disease. As far as a diligent attending surgeon, the recurrence rates have been satisfactory, with very low rates of complications and sequelae.

On February 7, 1998, I joined the “American Hernia Society”, invited and presented by the responsible person for the affiliations to the society, Dr. Robert Bendavid himself! Then, I was able to meet personally with the professor, in successive meetings, both in the USA and in Europe. Today, I no longer belong to that association, but I tried to read everything he wrote. By the way, he is the author of the aphorism that serves as the title of this article.

In my opinion, more than studious and experienced, Dr. Robert Bendavid represented the most consistent and robust counterpoint in favor of tissue repair (anatomical) of inguinal hernia, and more, without any real conflict of interest. His arguments rested on the inalienable credit to the fibroblast, the surgeon’s closest friend, without which there would never be the most remote possibility of surgical treatment of any disease. His medical posture praised, at the same time, the diligent and ethical exercise of Clinical Surgery and Operative Technique, keystones of our specialty.

1 - Universidade Federal de Goiás, Cirurgia - Goiânia - GO - Brasil.

A true master is perpetuated by his ideas and attitudes, always consistent with the posture he adopted throughout his life. It was an honor and a privilege for me to have met and learned from Professor Robert Bendavid. It doesn't matter if it's past, present or future - it's just a fact. And there are no arguments against the facts!

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Endereço para correspondência:

Renato Miranda de Melo

E-mail: dr.renatomelo@gmail.com

