

Editorial

Jorge Fairbanks Barbosa:

A leader in Head and Neck Oncologic Surgery

Head and neck cancer surgery has a recent history in South America and we are familiar with the names Alonso, Fairbanks Barbosa, Salem, Suarez, Yoel and a lot of other giants in this area. These leaders established the basis for the modern National Societies, which are members of the South American Federation of Head and Neck Societies.

In the preface of one of the bibles of head and neck oncologic surgery, the world leader John Conley wrote: "It is rare today to be exposed to a book that measures an individual's professional experience, his scientific growth, his medical maturity, and his human citizenship entirely within a single volume. Jorge Fairbanks Barbosa has extended these qualities in his life into a sincere and fundamental treatise of his personal experience with the surgical treatment of tumors of the head and neck". This is the synthesis of Barbosa's life. A teacher of great note, a leader, an innovator, a superb surgeon that was far advanced for his time.

He was the Founder and Chief of the Head and Neck Surgery Department of the Central Institute (Hospital do Câncer A C Camargo) of the Associação Paulista de Combate ao Câncer (now, Fundação Antonio Prudente). Barbosa work was recognized nationally and internationally, and his leadership was critical to the development of the Brazilian Head and Neck Surgery. These well recognized qualifications made him an obvious choice for first President of the Brazilian Head and Neck Society. Barbosa was also a member of several scientific societies including the American Society for Head and Neck Surgery and American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

Barbosa was an outstanding otolaryngologist that encompassed a broad field of oncology and reconstruction and has contributed extensively to the medical literature, with particular interest in ablative head and neck oncologic surgery, reconstructive techniques and cancer prevention. His contributions to the literature amounts more than 100 scientific papers and books (neck dissection, oral cancer). He also prepared, but unfortunately was unable to finish two other books (pharynx and larynx). Furthermore, his legendary contribution, that can be seen in hundreds of medical libraries worldwide, is the white big book "Surgical Treatment of head and neck Tumors", published in 1974.

His voluminous and extraordinary contributions to the development of new surgical oncology techniques included some original publications on paranasal sinuses (maxillectomy with infratemporal approach), oral cavity (retromolar operation) and neck dissections (simultaneous bilateral radical neck dissection with preservation of internal jugular vein). He also worked hardy in establishing high level standards for Head and Neck Surgery training, continuous training, and prepared a legion of well recognized specialists in Brazil and other countries of South America. Barbosa's enthusiastic and regular participation in meetings and his historical contributions were models for generations of Head and Neck Surgeons.

Barbosa's contributions to the literature, to the teaching and to the development of Brazilian Head and Neck Surgery were unfortunately interrupted

by his premature death. However, in these years of explosive growth of multidisciplinary treatment and new technologies, he has been a continuing source of inspiration for most Brazilian Head and Neck Surgeons devoted to the multidisciplinary comprehensive care of head and neck cancer patients.

As it can be recognized by Barbosa's publications more than 30 years ago, the prospect

for bringing head and neck under control will be only improved through a strong commitment to innovative basic and clinical research. It is necessary to join our efforts on the understanding from the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, to the most advanced techniques of reconstruction, adjuvant therapy or, what are more important, measures for quality of life improvement.

Luiz Paulo Kowalski