
EDITORIAL

On the 100th Birthday of Prof. Dr. med. Juan Manuel Tato: Pioneer in Advancing Otorhinolaryngology into Modern Neurootology

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As early as 1969, I met Prof. Dr. med. Juan Manuel Tato of Buenos Aires, Argentina, during his visit to the University of Würzburg where, in 1864, Dr. von Troeltsch created the speciality of otology. Dr. Tato appeared as a true Spanish gentleman: polite, charming, well educated, and experienced in the ultimate stage of development of ear surgery, not only showing interest in but already turning toward involvement in modern neurootology.

Dr. Tato was born in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1902. There he graduated from the medical school and finally became an internationally recognized ear surgeon, living in close contact with the leading group of innovators in ear, nose, and throat (ENT) procedures, among them: Lempert, Bordley, Shambough, House, Schuknecht, Rubin, and Pulec in the United States; Michele Portmann (senior and junior), Greiner, and Pialoux in France; Zange, Zoellner, and Wullstein in Germany; Candela, Gavilan, and Bartual in Spain; Bustamante in Mexico; Surjan and Ribari in Hungary; Morimoto, Fukuda, and Sakata in Japan; DeSa and Kirtane in India; Freeman in Australia; Hamberger and Henriksson in Sweden; Groen and Jongkees in Holland; Luescher, Pfaltz, and Fisch in Switzerland; Mangabeira-Albernaz and Malavasi in Brazil; Arslan in Italy; Kishinishvili in Russia; Rius, and Castillo in Uruguay; Tello Tello and Delucchi in Chile; and a great number of important contemporary otorhinolaryngological (ORL) specialists, whose names and countries of origin would constitute a further long list.

Dr. Tato has become very famous within the field of ORL, having introduced modern ear surgery into South America as early as 1933. At that time, he performed the first fenestration of the inner ear in a case of oto-

sclerosis in Argentina. Besides keeping up with international standards in the development of ear surgery up to the present day, he also introduced phono-audiology more than 40 years ago as a supporting academic subspecialty of ORL. After 1972, he extended this field by adding to it neurootology. As the term *neurootology* expresses best, this new field is a child of ORL, whereas otoneurology describes the otological aspect of neurology. In Buenos Aires, Dr. Tato soon became chairman of the ORL clinic of one of the medical schools at the Hospital Italiano.

In addition, he ran a very successful private clinic in Buenos Aires. There, he received clients and patients from Argentina, from the Americas, and from further abroad, among whom are many celebrities. For the Spanish-speaking world, he founded the important journal, *Revista ORL*, in the pages of which authors from many countries present the latest developments in the field of ORL, including audiology and neurootology.

Together, Dr. Tato and I have published in Buenos Aires a textbook about the modern trends of objective and quantitative neurootometry under the title *Equilibriometria Practica* (1972). In that city, we have performed an international training course for neurootology, including electronystagmography, topodiagnosics by means of the “butterfly calorigram,” craniocorporography, and other test procedures.

Ever since then, Dr. Tato and I have had a close personal relationship. I learned much about Dr. Tato and benefited very much from his extraordinary abilities as an unusually successful teacher, a convincing organizer of medical educational courses, and an understanding friend and fatherly advisor. Among Dr. Tato’s special gifts are his great ability to attract people, even those

with very adverse opinions, and to motivate them to discuss the matter-of-fact seriously and with respect. Therefore, with sympathy and respect, his alumni and friends call him *maestro*.

With his international background and deep knowledge of the matter of neurotology and the needs of neurotometry, Dr. Tato stimulated us in 1974 to bring together those who were interested in forming an international society for neurotology that would allow for a discussion in four languages (German, Spanish, English, and French): Gesellschaft für Neurotologie und Aequilibrimetrie; Sociedad de Neurotologia y Equilibrimetria Reg; Neurotological and Equilibrimetric Society Reg; and Société de Neurotologie et D'Équilibrimetrie Reg.

The aims of the association remain the same:

1. To promote clinical neurotology in practice and in the field of clinical research
2. To train doctors and paramedical personnel who are interested in this field to make neurotological diagnoses, paying special attention to tests of functional equilibrium
3. To standardize clinical methods of research and research equipment
4. To create functional anthropometric standards
5. To develop selection principles for employee recruitment in fields in which functional strain particularly affects the neurotological functioning of the senses
6. To enable participation, with the help of neurotological and medical advice, in the development of new transport technology and other technologies wherein disorientation strain occurs
7. To develop therapeutic modalities in the field of neurotology, especially those related to diseases

with vertigo, giddiness, dizziness, hearing loss, tinnitus, and the like

Persons eligible for membership in this society are doctors or technicians especially interested in neurotology or the measurement of equilibrium together with the other cranial senses, independent of their nationality. Now our membership numbers more than 650 persons living in some 48 nations.

In 1996, during the twenty-third Neurotological and Equilibrimetric Society meeting, a special award was created, carrying the name of Prof. Dr. Tato. It honors scientific works that contribute specially to development in neurotological diagnoses and therapies. During the 1970s, the international world of ENT studies elected Dr. Tato to be the president of the International Federation of Otolaryngological Organizations and to host and organize the unforgettable event of the 1977 International Ear, Nose, and Throat Congress in Buenos Aires.

Dr. Tato's family—his wife, Mrs. Elisa Tato (now 98 years old); his son, Prof. Dr. J.M. Tato Jr. ("Tatin," now 70 years old and also a specialist in ORL); his daughter, Elisa Sturla (now 62 years old and a specialist in phono-audiology); and 12 grandchildren—have supported him throughout his life. As his son, Tatin, recently wrote on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of his father's birth, "We always kept a relation of professional and familial respect and admiration." We at the *International Tinnitus Journal* add our voices to those of the group of international colleagues and neurotologists wishing sincere congratulations to Dr. Tato on the occasion of his centenary anniversary: Thank you for stimulating, leading, and advising us so well, Maestro Tato!

Prof. Claus-F. Claussen