

Miguel Iriarte Ezcurdia

Miguel Iriarte passed away recently and it seems fitting to pay tribute in the pages of *REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA* to this long-standing member of our society. During Miguel Iriarte's long career, he left many reminders of his unique personality in the professional, academic and personal spheres.

On graduating in medicine and surgery from the University of Valladolid, Miguel went to the Mexico National Institute of Cardiology for his initial training in cardiology, attracted by that institution's reputation in the years following the Second World War. The Institute's prestige owed much to its founder, Ignacio Chávez, who surrounded himself with a group of highly respected collaborators, which included Cabrera, Carral, Costero, Espino-Vela, Fishleder, and Sodi-Pallarés, among others. All of these would go on to become leaders in the field of cardiology, thanks to their scientific contributions and to the wide-ranging influence they achieved through their disciples, many of whom were Spanish. On returning to his native Bilbao in the late 1950's, Miguel Iriarte became director of Clinical Cardiology and Research at the Eliseo Migoya Institute of Cardiology in the Vizcaya Pro-Cardíacos Foundation. "Pro-Cardíacos", as it was popularly known, was a private institution which, in only a few short years and thanks to Miguel Iriarte's prominence at the head of a small group of enthusiastic cardiologists, would become a magnet for clinicians wishing to train in cardiology or complete their training in the field. I was fortunate enough to be one of those who studied at "Pro-Cardíacos". Having recently completed my internship at the Casa de Salud Valdecilla in Santander, I went to "Pro-Cardíacos" to prepare my doctoral dissertation under the wise direction of Miguel Iriarte. The long working days in "Pro-Cardíacos" which I was fortunate to share with some of the people mentioned below, provided me with an insight into Miguel Iriarte's professional and human qualities. For half a year, I had the opportunity to observe his stature as a cardiologist, and I experienced at first-hand his clinical vocation, which leaned heavily towards teaching, his devotion to research, and his continual searching for a deeper understanding of the pathophysiology of the heart. Many of us were infected at that time by Miguel's enthusiasm, and would consider ourselves his disciples—Aguirre, Arias, Arruza, Ayerbe, Azcuna, Barrenechea, Bobío, Bóveda, Cabrera, Cobo, Gárate, Gil de la Peña, Hernández, Lekuona, Molinero, Nekane Murga, Navarro-Salas (†), Sagastagoitia, Vázquez, among others.

After only a few years as head of the Cardiology Department in the Cruces Hospital in Baracaldo, near Bilbao, he moved on to the Hospital Civil in Basurto, Bilbao, a well-known teaching hospital, where he would continue his notable work as clinician, teacher, and researcher while serving as the hospital's head of cardiology. He was also Professor of Cardiology at the University of the Basque Country, where he taught cardiology to several generations of students. A distinguished member of the Spanish Society of Cardiology, he was for half a century a leading light in cardiology, both in the Basque Country and the rest of Spain. He was president of the XXIst Congress of the Spanish Society of Cardiology, which was held in Bilbao in 1988. His wide-ranging curiosity as a researcher first shone out in his study of the semiology of congenital heart disease. It is to him that we owe the first description in Spain of the "coarse diastolic variety" of persistent ductus arteriosus. Using phonocardiography, Iriarte demonstrated that the diastolic murmur in this condition was not due to pulmonary insufficiency. Other noteworthy lines of research included his investigations into heart failure with preserved systolic function, and nuclear cardiology. Although only a brief summary of his work can be provided here, his research into hypertensive heart disease also deserves mention, his contribution to the understanding and classification of this condition achieving international recognition.

Miguel Iriarte's was a controversial personality, as could not be otherwise when one considers his patrimonial view of leadership, his unshakeable firmness in his beliefs, and his tenacious pursuit of his objectives. The premature and unexpected death of his son Mikel left an indelible mark. Although Miguel's long and painful physical decline led to a weakening of both loyalties and resentments, many of us will retain both a sense of gratitude toward him, as well as a painful memory of the great teacher he was.

Mary Tere was throughout, and to the end, his most faithful support; a companion and wife who dedicated body and soul to caring for Miguel. We share in her pain.

To this Basque cardiologist, teacher, researcher and friend—may he rest in peace.

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