

Response

To the Editor:

I would like Dr Alonso-Lej, who I admire and respect, to know how grateful I am for the words he dedicated to my recent article.¹

With regard to his comments: «As far as the claim that Dr Torrent was first to publish, in 1970, that the mitral annulus contracts, I am sorry to have to contradict him,» Pedro Zarco based this claim on an article of mine (co-authored by Prof Alexander Puff, of the University of Freiburg, Germany), published that year in the journal of the Sociedad Española de Cardiología.³ However, he failed to mention, in his magnificent editorial on the nature of the motor determinant of fast filling, that I described such functional fact much earlier, in 1959, in a short monograph (An experimental approach on heart dynamics, Imp. S. Aguirre Torre, Madrid, 1959), in which the reduction in the diameter of the mitral annulus is described. In that monograph we compiled all the experimental data that I had obtained in the 1950s in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology of the Eugene Talmadge Hospital of Augusta, Georgia (U.S.A.).

In fact, at that time nobody, or hardly anyone, was interested in my work and Alonso-Lej, like most people, was unaware of the existence of my monograph and, consequently, of the description that I made in this monograph of that functional particularity of the mitral annulus. On the other hand, in the late 1950s, I was not at all concerned about the clinical applications that my contribution to the knowledge of cardiac structure and mechanics could have, which is why I limited myself to describing the fact without placing it in the context of cardiac valve diseases and their surgical treatment, a subject that did not interest me at the time.

Nonetheless, I see, according to the data cited by Alonso-Lej, that his description and publication might have preceded mine. However, if this was the case, it was only by a short time. This phenomenon has been repeated frequently in history, the independent finding of scientific facts at almost the same time by contemporary authors.

Francisco Torrent Guasp

REFERENCES

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2. Zarco P. La fase de llenado rápido ventricular: ¿un proceso de relajación o de contracción muscular? *Rev Esp Cardiol* 2001;54:1031-2.
3. Torrent Guasp F, Puff A. La dinámica valvular. *Rev Esp Cardiol* 1970;23:191-208.