

In memoriam

## Juan Martínez Milla



*“One should savor fine weather, pause for breath and hold on to it”*

Essays. Michel de Montaigne

Our dear colleague Juan Martínez Milla came from Soria, the city he lived in as a child and where he always had his roots, although he moved to Madrid to undertake his university studies. Motivated by a vocation that would never falter, he studied medicine at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, where he showed the motivation and academic ability characteristic of him and everything he did in the years that followed.

It is often said that the benefit of walking common paths lies in the possible encounters that may arise. Well, that is what happened to us, walking the same path of medicine, we were grateful that Juan chose our hospital (*Hospital Universitario Fundación Jiménez Díaz*) to undertake his cardiology residency. That is how we came to meet him and in time he became a permanent part of our family, but the impression he left on our team did not end with the completion of his 5 years of residency (2014-2019): after completing them with excellence, we were honored to have him join the team as an attending physician in our coronary unit. Thus began his period of specialization in acute cardiological care, and he soon became an essential member in driving the development of our hospital department, contributing his entrepreneurial spirit and his ability to enhance the department's capacity and to encourage multidisciplinary work with colleagues from other hospital departments, especially those from the emergency department, intensive care medicine, and cardiac surgery.

Those who were lucky enough to know him from the beginning of his professional journey—first as mentors, then as colleagues in the unit or team, and always as friends—were constantly learning from him and with him. His tireless enthusiasm for our profession was contagious, from his generosity and the spirit and energy with which he faced every challenge and managed to turn every

difficulty into a stimulating opportunity. Thanks to this and his endless dedication he was also able to combine his clinical care with brilliant research work in collaboration with the *Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cardiovasculares* (CNIC), which started with his doctoral studies, continued with the publication of articles, and on to his obtaining the title of Doctor in Medicine from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid *cum laude* in 2020 and which continued with promise, through various different ongoing translational and clinical research projects.

In addition to these considerable, commendable professional merits, Juan also stood out just as much or even more for his personal qualities, most notably his affable and cheerful manner and a good nature that could be seen from his always smiling face. With this, and his vitality and humanity, Juan graced the life of those around him, showing them by his example that the value of life prevails, precisely by living it not just for one's own good but for that of others; that it is worth living if you live taking your time in everything and trying to not let anything hold you back (as a poet from his part of the world said), without losing heart when it comes time to care and support.

For all these reasons, and more that will remain indelible in the memory of those who knew him well, his premature and sudden death, at the age of 33 this July 2022, leaves us submersed in a deep pain and flooded with feelings of incomprehension, resistance and defiance faced with such an unfair destiny for someone who had their whole life ahead of them full of possibilities, all well-deserved. Despite our enormous grief, all of us who loved and love him know that we cannot remain in this place of shock and bewilderment. We know that Juan would not have wanted that; quite the opposite, he would have wanted our spirits to remain high, that we would overcome this due mourning to continue working with team spirit, empathy, passion and dedication... as he did but now, tragically, cannot continue. Juan united around him a large medical family, of which his cardiology colleagues are proud to have been at the core and to which so many other colleagues from our hospital also belong, who join in our mourning. Together, we sincerely condole his loss, in an effort to honor him and accompany his most loved ones, among them his wife, father, sister, parents-in-law and other friends and relatives. Together, in the days to come, we will be made stronger by his memory, reliving it so that we can continue in the way he would have wanted.

Dear Juan, we will always have you in our minds. Seneca said that only what is cultivated from start to finish will bear fruit. Your life was an example of that, and because of that, you will always be with us.

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