

Prof. Dr. Manuel García Caballero.



IN MEMORIAM

“(Se me ha muerto como del rayo...
con quien tanto quería...)”

Un manotazo duro, un golpe helado,
un hachazo invisible y homicida,
un empujón brutal te ha derribado...

A las aladas almas de las rosas
del almendro de nata te requiero,
que tenemos que hablar de muchas cosas,
compañero del alma, compañero.”

Miguel Hernández, “Elegía a Ramón Sijé”, 1936

As everybody know, our colleague and vice-president of the MGB/OAGB International Club, died after a hard, fast and unfortunate disease last February 19 in the afternoon.

Manuel (Manolo in Spanish), was born in Granada (Spain), and was a tireless fighter and a hard worker since the early years of his life. Like almost all Spaniards of his time, he had to work very hard to make their first nursing studies and that work can be paid after medical studies at the University of Granada.

Then he continued to work at the Department of Surgery to complete the specialty, emphasizing later in research, teaching and surgical epidemiology.

Manolo had greatness but always aspire to more, to break the narrow confines of his hometown and his spirit of research without limits or fears led him to Germany where he spent several years working with our common friend, the Prof. Edmund Neugebauer in the Institute for Research in operative medicine of the University of Witten-Herdecke in Colonia, when he delved into research and surgical epidemiology that led later to the vast majority of laparoscopic consensus conference protocols approved years later by the EAES.

When he returned to Spain his desire for change and broader horizons led him to the University of Malaga where he soon began working as a professor in the Department of Surgery and an interest in the problems of nutrition, infections, obesity and its clinical or pharmacological implications.

That initial interest led him to new research projects at the University of Tokio and to begin organizing its first advanced academic courses at the University of Málaga; initially by the Department of Biochemistry at aspects related to inflammation, epidemiology or the immune system, but later evolving into nutrition and subsequently towards obesity and its related diseases.

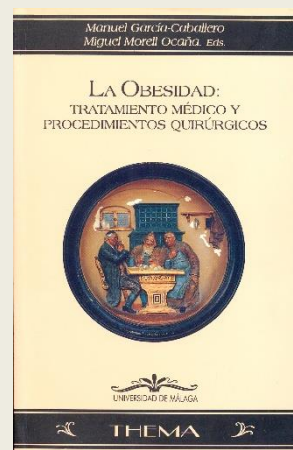
I first met **Manolo** early nineties, when he attended one of the many workshops in advanced laparoscopic surgery in live I organized monthly as Head of Department Surgery of the Medina del Campo Hospital (Valladolid), but it was a forgotten contact until another meeting in one of the first courses in Laparoscopic Bariatric Surgery organized by the IRCAD- EITS (Strasbourg, Prof. J. Marescaux) in March 1996, promoted to the placement of Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding.

Then again walked our separate lives, mine in the daily tasks of a pure Hospital surgical activity where we made the first series published Obesity Surgery by Laparoscopy performed in Spain. It's activity continued to focus on strengthening University academic and research activities, as well as Director of the annual courses Malaga University, increasingly focused on the field of nutrition and obesity.

But five years later in April 2001, he asked me to attend our daily surgical sessions with Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass, and also participate in the ongoing work then we conducted in Campo Grande Hospital (Valladolid) in our new "Center of Excellence for the Study and Treatment of Obesity and Metabolic Diseases".

No doubt these were decisive moments in his life, because this personal decision to move to the active surgical world and immerse himself in Bariatric Surgery practice and real, would transform their professional, social and family environment inaugurating a new future for his life. Until then I had not linked us anything special, but I convinced his strong theoretical foundation and its commitment to fully immerse and engage in practical work to date had no opportunity to perform.

Our professional and personal relationship was narrowing progressively during the time he was capturing the practical surgical problems as complex as Gastric Bypass by Laparoscopy in a few years activity in which the experience was not all desirable and the technology was still quite primitive. At that time we began studying the first publications of Dr. Robert Rutledge and be interested in the emerging ensuing debate;



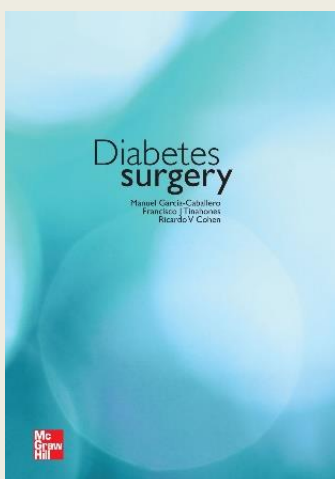
but one of the trips **Manolo** to our Center in spring 2002, its persuasiveness beat my initial misgivings about a new “unknown” technique for a surgeon like me who was Founder of the Spanish Society of Obesity Surgery and had already passed through the filter restrictive, malabsorptive and bypass techniques both open and laparoscopic.

Manolo finally convinced me as only he knew how much scientific arguments and practical criteria and managed to make the first MGB were made in Spain (Campo Grande Hospital, Valladolid, July 2002). The problem was making the anastomosis because in my mind did not fit the term-lateral mechanical model of Dr. Rutledge and had to do a procedure that had never seen before, and besides try to minimize the countless criticisms reflux.

In practice I had from my previous experience with Capella’s GB (long gastric tube and side-to-side anastomosis semi-mechanical); the so-called “anti-reflux procedure” was a theoretical concept that **Manolo** knew add later and again with that great power of persuasion that always characterized him.

The first patients evolved well; endoscopic satisfactory controls and monitoring superb short term. **Manolo** lived the whole process from Malaga and I have in my memory the tremendous satisfaction of those dates. In the clinical records of my first patients appeared the name of MGB. But **Manolo** a year later returned to convince me again: OAGB was “appropriate” ...and the name and technique was born to stay.

The following years were hectic for both professional and scientific activity it established a tandem collaboration and excellent work in common. During the International Congress of Laparoscopy (2003), and Morbid Obesity (2004) as well as the International MMESA (2006), in which I was President of the same, **Manolo** also worked as Chairman of the Scientific Committee and its dedication in front of it was commendable, getting into all International representation as had never reached in Spain. The presence of Drs Rutledge and Peraglia in Valladolid in 2004 was very important for the future of bariatric surgery in the world and **Manolo** owes his job to get it.



Later (2008), he organized as President the National Congress of Bariatric Surgery and his University Courses progressively acquired international fame.

These are the years in which Manolo development the most of all their great scientific and professional potential. He opened his own Center for Bariatric Surgery in 2008 starting to mint their own series and surgical experiences, and specifically began to deepen the study and surgical treatment of Diabetes; he published a valuable textbook on this disease, as well as a large number of scientific papers. His presence in International and

National forums became essential in all these years and their contributions to the promotion and development of the OAGB technique and its application to any model of diabetes, have been recognized and valued in perspective community international scientific. In the Academics field, also it reached in recent years the highest degree that a professional can acquire, that of Professor of Surgery at the University of Málaga.

Manolo never had the toughest limits and risky scientific horizons; his persuasiveness is unquestionable and its capabilities for Research and Education have had no limit. Always professed love for his wife Blanca and his three children and grandchildren as the core of his family has been a model of honesty and accountability to follow in the difficult society in which we live. Being in full intellectual and professional production befell the terrible disease that ended his life, but certainly not forgotten their duties and responsibilities. I met casually the drama that was coming, but only had a smile and an active presence until the last moment of his life.

None of us can forget his last speeches and scientific lectures in the last Course MGB/OAGB in IFSO Vienna last August, when disease as besieging and friendly active presence on the constitution of our International Bariatric Club despite being fully aware of the limited time that awaited him. All this honors his memory and none of it remain in the oblivion of our hearts. **Manolo**, all you have lost and pain grips memories...that are still alive and those will never be erased. Rest in peace,...”que tenemos que hablar de muchas cosas, compañero del alma, compañero.”

Miguel-Angel Carbajo, PhD, MD
Valladolid, Spain, February 2016

