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EDITORIAL

Suso Pintor (1964-2019): The art of making science look easy



Suso Pintor (1964-2019): El arte de que parezca fácil hacer ciencia

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Dr. Jesús Jerónimo Pintor Just, Suso, born in Vigo (Spain) in 1964, discovered in adolescence his passion: biochemistry. After finishing his degree in Biology with a specialty in Biochemistry at the Complutense University of Madrid, he joined the research group of María Teresa Miras Portugal to do his doctoral thesis entitled "Diadenosine polyphosphates new transmitters of the purinergic system: localization, receptors and function". Everything seemed to lead him to investigate a family of molecules called nucleotides and their role in the brain.¹ But fate wanted to cross in his path a position of assistant professor in the School of Optics of the Complutense University. His research life changed location: from the brain to the eye.

Suso Pintor had the gift of doing science, that is, generating ideas and experiencing them, and also made it look easy. He discovered the hypotensive capacity of melatonin on a trip to ARVO when he realized that the daily variation of melatonin concentration due to the circadian cycle was inverse to the daily variation of intraocular pressure.² It was also at ARVO that a pharmaceutical laboratory –Inspire Pharmaceuticals– decided to fund Suso Pintor's research group because they realized that Suso Pintor had reached the same results as them with much fewer resources: the

use of nucleotides as a treatment for dry eye. From here, his research group has almost completely characterized the function of melatonin and nucleotides and the location of their respective receptors in the eye.³

Suso Pintor showed that basic science does not make sense if the results obtained do not have applicability in the future. The aim of science is to achieve technology transfer that reverts to a benefit for society. One of the last lines of research that he opened was the use of contact lenses as devices for the release of drugs. Experiments in the animal model showed that the release of some nucleotides through the contact lens increased its beneficial effects on the ocular surface.⁴ But his scientific concern was not only in the eyeball, and he devoted part of his time to research in the search for treatment of a relatively rare disease, achondroplasia, finding the receptors that cause the lack of growth of bone cartilage.⁵

Scientific passion flooded everything Suso did, including teaching. There is no better way to teach research than research itself. In a course on scientific methodology, students were involved in an experiment to evaluate whether melatonin existed in human tears. And the students obtained a double discovery: melatonin in the human tear and motivation to do a research career.⁶

Author of 225 scientific articles, inventor of 25 patents and participation in 74 research projects show the scientific dimension of Suso, culminated with his appointment as the

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youngest academican of number at the Royal Academy of Pharmacy (with the medal number 36) on November 6 of 2014 and being its Secretary General until the date of his death. For those who had him so close it will be impossible to forget him because he inoculated us his philosophy of life and therefore every act we carry out from now on will have a little piece of Suso that will make him present.

Rest in peace in our beloved Galicia.

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