

IN MEMORIAM



ALEJANDRO RUIZ-ARGÜELLES, M.D., 1952-2019

Dr. Alejandro Ruiz-Argüelles died on July 25, 2019. He was a firm and important supporter in the areas of clinical immunology laboratory, clinical flow cytometry, and analytical cytology throughout Latin America. He was born in Puebla, Mexico, to a medical family: his grandfather was a radiologist, while his father is a now-retired distinguished hematologist and his elder brother is a renowned hematologist as well.

Dr. Ruiz-Argüelles obtained his M.D. from Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, Mexico, aged 24. He undertook graduate studies at the Instituto Nacional de la Nutrición (1976-1980), where he became a dedicated follower of Niels Jerne's network theory of the immune system. His passion for flow cytometry, using a Fc200 cytofluorograph from Ortho Diagnostics, was born there as well. He continued his postgraduate studies at the Mayo Clinic (1980-1982), thanks to grants from the Mayo Clinic Research Foundation and the Fogarty International Center of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. He was certified by the American Board of Medical Laboratory Immunology in 1982.

His mentor in Mexico at the Instituto Nacional de la Nutrición, Dr. Donato Alarcón-Segovia, wished, as did all of us at the time, for him to return to the bosom of the Institute. It was not to be, however: Alejandro decided to go back to Puebla to join a private institution founded by his father, Clínica Ruiz/Laboratorios Clínicos de Puebla. It was there where all his career in patient care, teaching, and research took place.

Dr. Ruiz-Argüelles's publications were manifold. He was proud that his first published paper appeared in Nature, with Alarcón-Segovia as coauthor (Alarcón-Segovia D, Ruiz-Argüelles A, Fishbein E. Antibody to nuclear ribonucleoprotein penetrates live human mononuclear cells through Fc receptors. Nature, 1978;271:67-9), a very original paper that demonstrated the penetration of antibodies into live cells, a finding that was met with a certain reticence at first, but which has been vindicated with time. His publications encompassed idiotypic regulation of the immune response, analytical methods in hematology and coagulation, complement regulatory proteins and hemocytopenias, multiple drug resistance in autoimmune diseases, apoptosis, and even vitiligo. In the latter, he postulated that melanocyte-specific antibodies might play a pathogenic role in the disease, which is characterized by the depletion of melanocytes and that this depletion may be due to apoptosis following antibody internalization.

His interest in flow cytometry and analytical cytology led him to organize courses and workshops all over Latin America, where he was respected and esteemed in an equal measure as a leader in this field, much so, in fact, that he became Vice-Chairman of the Scientific Division of the Federation of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC), Chair of the IFCC Scientific Division's Committee on Standardization of Clinical Flow Cytometry, and a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the International Society for Analytical Cytology. Needless to say, his professional career and publications were recognized with various prizes both in Mexico and in the rest of Latin America. He was the Medical Director and then General Director of Laboratorios Clínicos de Puebla, a private organization that has provided both doctors and patients with state-of-the-art diagnostic services for more than 65 years.



Dr. Ruiz-Argüelles's commitment with the goals of this organization, that is, service and research, led to excellence in providing academic and professional services to its programs, including those involving training of human resources for the practice of clinical medicine and scientific research.

Alejandro will be sorely missed as a colleague but that is only part of the story. He was an ever-smiling, optimistic person, full of charm, and with an extraordinary zest for life, which manifested itself, for example, in his delight in and loyalty to his many friends. It is difficult to come to terms with his untimely death. I prepared this in memoriam for all those who knew him; needless to say that Alejandro will never be forgotten.

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