



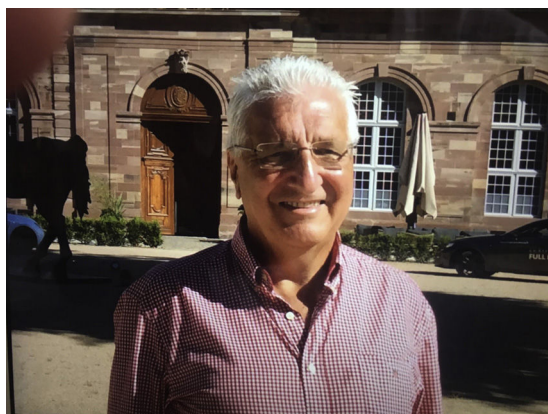
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In memoriam. Gonzalo de las Heras Castaño[☆]

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On 27 June we learned the unfortunate news of the death of our friend Gonzalo de las Heras at the age of 69 years, about 7 months after discovering the disease. He faced the process with great serenity, knowledgeable and an expert, as he was, of the disease that afflicted him.

Gonzalo was born in Gijón, Asturias, the son of pharmacists. He was the second of 5 children. He went to school at the Instituto de Enseñanza Media (Secondary School) of Cuenca del Nalón before going on to study at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Salamanca, where he met his wife Esther Palmero. He graduated in 1973. Gonzalo and Esther were married in 1974 and had 3 sons, Gonzalo, Arturo and Eduardo. He completed his residency at the Gastroenterology Department of the Marqués de Valdecilla University Hospital of Santander, after which he immediately

started working as a physician associate in 1978. He completed an internship at the Gastroenterology Department of Hospital Clínico de Valencia with Dr Luis Aparisi in 1978 to acquire training in functional gastrointestinal examinations, with a focus on pancreatic examinations, which he later implemented in his hospital. It was at this moment when his enthusiasm for pancreatic disease was aroused, which stayed with him throughout his life. Towards the end of 1979 he published his first article in *Revista Española de Enfermedades del Aparato Digestivo* entitled "The Lundh test in chronic pancreatitis".

In 1989 he co-founded the National Association for the Study of the Pancreas (*Asociación Nacional para el Estudio del Páncreas*, ANEP), now called the Spanish Association of Pancreatology. He participated actively in all the meetings held by the association, organising the 1994 and 2007 meetings in Santander. He was also a member of the Spanish Society of Gastrointestinal Diseases and the Spanish Association of Gastroenterology (*Asociación Española de Gastroenterología*, AEG) since its foundation in 1999.

In 1991 he defended his doctoral thesis entitled "Natural history of chronic alcoholic pancreatitis. Clinical and functional study", directed by Dr Fernando Pons. Then, in 1995 he moved for 6 months to the Pancreatic Unit of the Royal Infirmary Hospital of Manchester led by Dr Joan Braganza to experiment on the effects of antioxidants on chronic pancreatitis.

Due to his good work, he was named Deputy Medical Director of Hospital Marqués de Valdecilla in 2000, a position that he held for almost 3 years. Having fulfilled this commitment in 2003, with renewed motivation, he spent almost a year in the Digestive Endoscopy Department of Hospital Clínic de Barcelona to learn about endoscopic ultrasonography that he would later apply in his hospital.

According to his colleagues, his greatest achievement was to organise from scratch the functional gastrointestinal

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testing unit, particularly pancreatic tests. In fact, it was a leading unit in the Autonomous Community of Cantabria. As mentioned above, he then went on to introduce endoscopic ultrasonography.

In 2002 he participated in the writing of the first *Exocrine Pancreas Treatise* published in Spain. He also published multiple articles, the most noteworthy of which considered the effect of antioxidants on pain in chronic pancreatitis, epidemiological aspects of this disease, analysis of certain mutations present in hereditary pancreatitis and some aspects regarding autoimmune pancreatitis, and he actively participated in the drafting of consensus statements on the activity of acute and chronic pancreatitis.

In 2009 he suffered the loss of his wife after a prolonged illness.

Gonzalo retired in 2013 but he continued his intellectual activity enrolling as a senior student in the Faculty of History of the University of Cantabria. He also maintained his two

great passions, golf and classical music, and shared good times with his friends.

He will always be remembered for his good work and his affable, open and friendly character, and especially for his optimism that he tried to convey to those around him. M. Dolores Prieto, his children, siblings and other relatives, friends and companions, who have been fortunate to share good and not so good times with him, will notice the hole that has been left in all of our lives and we will remember him with great affection.

Rest in peace, Gonzalo, dear friend.

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Asociación Española de Pancreatología

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