

FRESH EYES

Forever, Together — In memoriam, Iriarte

Para siempre, ¡JUNTOS! In memoriam... Iriarte

Andrés Pacheco Rodríguez

I haven't slept this much in a long time... and such silly dreams...

With background music: Zeppelin, "Stairway to heaven"¹ (listen to how it starts!)... "allá en el otro mundo" by Roberto Carlos², I'm telling you...!

Ambulances, firemen, police, protección civil, red cross... are the health emergency technicians demonstrating? You should know that the Ministry of Health does not include them in the COVID-19. Check it out. Almost abandoned by politicians because that has to do with businesses of private companies... What a move! From the base of the medicalized ambulance (mobile ICU) of the Emergency Management (GUETS) of the Healthcare Service of Castilla La Mancha (SESCAM), in Tomelloso, to the entrance of the Emergency Service of the hospital of Tomelloso. Wow, applause and more applause. And sirens and more sirens. Look, an ambulance with a banner. It says something about Iriarte. Our colleague and coordinator of the GUETS in Tomelloso, who supports them personally! What a great guy! And a really good guy...

I've got so many messages on the cell phone. Phew! Hundreds... did you all agree? And this video? A hearse among the ambulance procession!

Let's see! What is this all about? Paco calls me. He asks me about Iriarte... who woke up around 4 a.m. startled and he couldn't sleep anymore. He felt like something serious had happened or was going to happen. Ah, well, I have no idea! Such things! The heads...

Today is April 22, 2020, almost mid-morning. Phone!

Jose Manuel Iriarte Osa (Figure 1), an emergency physician, died in the ICU fighting with COVID-19.

Well, well, well... The little Bug jokes, SARS-CoV-2... Yesterday afternoon I spoke with Igone, his wife, I was also afraid. She feared the worst. Serious but stable. As long as that heart is beating, there is hope. I've asked the e-mail groups, the emergency department and emergency health groups, to pray a lot for those who know how to pray and are most trained. Every afternoon, prayers and masses are held on the internet for all the colleagues who have suffered from this. I think José Manuel is the only one left now in the ICU. Everyone with him. Prayers and more prayers with the emoticon of the hands together in vertical pointing upwards... the-

re Elena, Leticia, Marina, Alf ... squeezing, with the chorus of companions the ED.

He's gone upstairs... That's enough for us... it is what it is. His body is gone but he's still here. There is no other like him. How can he leave?

Now I remember. He sent me a message one night at about 5 a.m. that he was exhausted and was going to be intubated, he said. Well, better, so that you can rest and be treated in the ICU, better that way. What are you afraid of? Well that is normal... Even I, I have thought the worst for me. It just happens that it's bad for me for now... Well come on have we not resuscitated and intubated "customers" trapped in cars, at night, with cold, or in the afternoon in summer, in La Mancha, also with "cold". And complicated heart attacks, arrhythmias and brain hemorrhages... And most of them, then, of their own accord. Well some have even thanked us and everything.

Well, it seems that it is, and everything indicates that it is. That this wait is over, we had hope... and now we are disheartened. Crying and more crying, knocking, banging on the table, on the wall. Hugs for the phone, for the messages... damn, damn, damn! Horrible!... The "Iri", our coordinator. My morning shift in the ambulance, during these last 16 years.

He was a loud man! His voice was like an alarm clock that wakes people in the morning! Jesus wept, he'd wear his beret in the winter. This man... Come on! Come on! Come on! Like an elephant in a scrapyard! He asked about everything! Is something missing; the pending documents, a judicial report the change of shift of... Has the plumber come? Dorin! Here we have to put a screw. Have you made the order to the hospital...

Stop it, stop it, annoying! Go home now! Boy, every day the same here. Unnecessary...always asking if everything is going well! If it isn't we'll call you.

Thirty years as an emergency doctor at El Tomelloso. First in Emergency Ciudad Real-006, with the firemen ("el Cero") and then integrated in the Emergency Management GUETS- SESCAM. And his league of hand-tennis or Basque-ball. You have to be brave in Tomelloso. This is half of La Mancha. Basque, with a car registered in San Sebastian in 1990, he integrated and was loved. From Deba-Zarautz, with Igone, his wife, and his baby Raquel, to Tomelloso ("ZudaRial"). Courage! In

Author affiliation: GUETS, Tomelloso, Ciudad Real, Spain.

Corresponding author: he author has confirmed his authorship in the author's responsibility document, publication agreement and transfer of rights to EMERGENCIAS.

Corresponding author: Andrés Pacheco Rodríguez. C/ Jaraiz, 1. 13300 Valdepeñas, Ciudad Real, Spain.

E-mail: apachecho1701@telefonica.net

Article information: Received: 20-5-2020. Accepted: 23-5-2020. Online: 23-6-2020.

Editor in charge: Antonio Juan Pastor.



Figure 1. José Manuel Iriarte Osa, pioneering emergency physician.

silence, sleeping, without haste, surrounded by prayers, many prayers, and love, much love, wrapped in the sound of his favorite music playing in his ears (Triana, Harrison, Beatles, your Basque rock bands). And his favorite song: "Txoria txori" by Mikel Laboa ("If I had clipped his wings he would have been mine, he would not have escaped. But this way I would have stopped being a bird"...)⁴.

Without a voice (rare in you), without a complaint, without a word... in silence... I can't believe it! You couldn't even say goodbye! You've taken the last trip... nowhere. To hell with retirement... Next year or the year after, we'd be taking early retirement... Yes, you and your dear Igone to enjoy your Basque Country... Fields, cliffs, beaches, sea, mountains, gastronomy... and friends! Because you came to stay, among us. Competent in your work, very much so. Cheerful, pleasant, methodical, committed -more than usual-, responsible. You infiltrated our pores, embraced our hearts, made us laugh and we liked that you were one of us. That's why you can't just leave. Your voices are still here, in the corridors and rooms of the base. Even if the base tiles and the ambulance floor are thoroughly cleaned, your footprints will still be there. They can be seen with ultraviolet light in the dark, or with those gadgets parapsychologists use. And your style and teachings will live on in some of those that remain, for sure.

His nurses... how lucky we were. He called them all "blondes" (generically) and "witches" (because of the morning hair). The boys, "rascals". Nurses there are blondes (Pilar, Miriam and Carmen) and brunettes (Rosa and Conchi), and also a male nurse. Proud of them, of their competence and joy in their daily work. How they are going to mourn you, they are already mourning... in silence or in public. What the hell! How they loved you! And your very own Javier de Buen, also a base doctor. Oscense rural, fellow traveler... They came to Tomelloso together, from the north, to work at the "zero". Partners, from the age of 14 at school, until the end of their careers. Almost 50 years. What a hole Javi! He will take it very quietly...

Well, I am, after all, the one who misses you the least, for now. First, because I don't believe it. Second,

because since the last shift you haven't missed me yet, because I'm also on leave in this war. Since I live in Valdepeñas, I haven't gone to Tomelloso yet. I'm still positive about the bug. Four positives.

They are going to be without "the minister without a test for them". So, for me (and for many) you haven't gone anywhere. Where were you going to go, out there alone?

I go back to sleep, to see if my dream can change, this one is difficult to handle, I don't like it at all! And in any case I'll hum the ditty of the blond scarlet of the Simply Red. For you and for the team (family) of the emergency ambulance of the Tomelloso. Cushá!

Simply Red: "We're in this together" (en esto estamos juntos)⁵.

Forever, together...

P.S.: Jose Manuel has lost his life, like many other colleagues, as a result of the risks of his profession, trying to protect the health and lives of others. As a tribute to all the health and parasanitary workers, colleagues in the emergency department who have died from COVID-19 infection, in the different battles of this war. Emergency Health Technicians, Red Cross, Protección Civil, Nurses, Medics, Auxiliary Nursing Care Technicians, Radiodiagnostic Technicians, Emergency Admissions, Orderlies, Security Guards, Maintenance and Cleaning Personnel, Laundry Technicians, Funeral Home Technicians...⁶ And especially, to my partner at the HEMS base, Florentino Sánchez, a medicalized helicopter pilot in Almagro, who also undertook, in silence, his last "flight" without return. Rest in PEACE.

Conflicting interests: The authors declare no conflict of interest in relation to this article.

Financing: The authors declare the non-existence of external funding in relation to this article.

Ethical responsibilities: All authors have confirmed the maintenance of confidentiality and respect for patients' rights in the author's responsibilities document, publication agreement and assignment of rights to EMERGENCIAS.

Article not commissioned by the Editorial Committee and external peer review.

References

- 1 Consultado en youtube: (Consultado 13 Mayo 2020). Disponible en: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ne6WYs8Ecgk>.
- 2 Consultado en youtube: (Consultado 13 Mayo 2020). Disponible en: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dp66FQQBJu4>
- 3 Consultado en facebook: (Consultado 13 Mayo 2020). Disponible en: <https://www.facebook.com/210590342420964/videos/578123826149930/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/210590342420964/videos/537556983616210/>.
- 4 Consultado en youtube: (Consultado 13 Mayo 2020). Disponible en: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIEFPQbqBQU>.
- 5 Consultado en youtube: (Consultado 13 Mayo 2020). Disponible en: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmQQJ8FQioc>.
- 6 Gobierno de España. Ministerio de Sanidad .Centro de Coordinación de Alertas y Emergencias Sanitarias. Actualización nº 104. Enfermedad por el coronavirus (COVID-19). 13.05.2020 (datos consolidados a las 21:00 horas del 12.05.2020). (Consultado 13 Mayo 2020). Disponible en: https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/documentos/Actualizacion_104_COVID-19.pdf. Acceso: 13-mayo-2020.