

João de Melo, MD

Carlos Soares de Sousa

João de Melo Oliveira Soares – Dr. João de Melo as he used to be known and is respectfully remembered with admiration, tenderness and gratitude by all those who worked with him and or benefited from his outstanding clinical, scientific and humane qualities – he well deserves to be placed in the gallery of the Portuguese Medicine most distinguished physicians.

His fine clinical intuition, his penetrating semiologic wisdom, his sound and updated knowledge on pathology and therapy, were translated in a natural and daily fashion throughout the years in the wards, in the service corridors, in technical scientific meetings – so often under the real proof of necropsy – on a pedagogic huge resource of deep penetration with repercussions throughout generations of physicians.

His thinking and approach became a higher paradigm of what has been admitted as concept and practice of Internal Medicine and its development. Well before that any rushing legislator thought about remember this to us, João Mello had always understood and witnessed that since Hippocrates, to promote and teach medicine is an obligation of every physician. Such witness has also worked, in an ethical level, namely regarding the attendance of institutional obligations and his permanent and cordial availability towards his patients and in supporting any colleague who might ask him so.

Graduated on 30 November 1930, in parallel with his clinical activity reaching all social levels, he has worked at the core of Porto Medical School, successively as a voluntary assistant in Medical Pathology, assistant beyond the Pathology and Medical Clinic set up (1940) and, from 1941 onwards, as an Assistant to the 6th section of the same school, cooperating with people who were or become hugely relevant some of which he had been an assistant to. His activity included frequently an active participation in scientific meetings in the Medical School, presenting and promoting the discussion of works, both individually and in cooperation, with a clinical, pathological anatomy and therapy character namely:

- “Sobre dois casos de lesões da arteria pulmonar”



[On two cases of pulmonary artery lesions] (1940)

- “Três observações de adissonianos submetidos a tratamento com cloreto de sódio e pela hormona sintética cortico-supra-renal” [Three observations of Addison patients subject to treatment with sodium chloride and the adrenocortical synthetic hormone] (1941)
- “Hemopatia hemocitopenica: cura após hemo-transfusão esternal” [Haemocytopenia haemopathy: cure after stern blood transfusion] (1947)

Dating from 1937 the publication of:

- “A propósito de um caso de Sodoku” [Apropos of a Sodoku case] (Portugal Médico, 1937) in cooperation with Ernesto Morais, followed by (as far as it was possibly to identify):
- “O valor da reacção de Kopackzewski no diagnóstico de cancro” [The value of Kopackzewski reaction in cancer diagnosis] (Portugal Médico, 1938)
- “A propósito de um caso de leucemia aguda” [Apropos of an acute leukaemia case] (Portugal Médico,

1939)

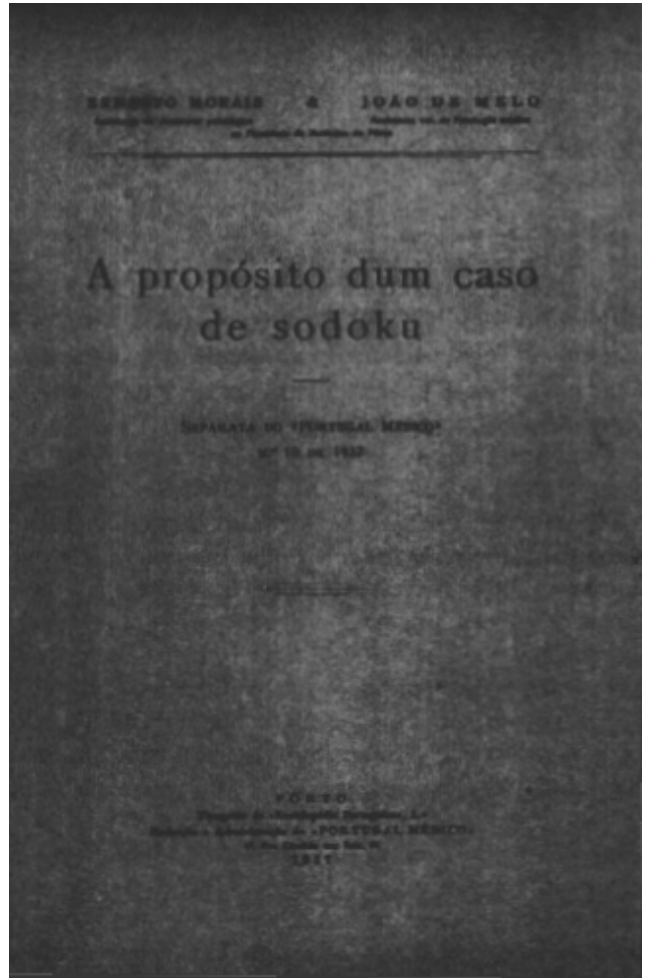
- “Quilite glandular” [Glandular Cheilitis] (Bulletin Santa Casa Hospital, 1941)
- “Estudo de um monstro acefaliano” [Study of an Acephalus Monster] (Universitatis Folica Anatomica Conimbrigensis, 1941)
- “Surpresas de diagnóstico na patologia da fossa iliaca direita” [Surprises in the diagnosis of right iliac fossae pathology] (Portugal Médico, 1942), in cooperation with A. Salvador Junior
- “Fibromas do intestino” [Intestinal fibromas] (Portugal Médico, 1945)
- “Helmintíase Intestinal e Apendicite – novos elementos” [Intestinal Helminthiasis and Appendicitis – new elements] (O Médico, 1953) where he identifies himself as a Doctor of Santo Antonio Hospital and emerges from the communication presented on the 15th Spanish-Portuguese Congress for the Progress of Science (Malaga, 1951) and this was not his only participation in scientific congresses.

From the start he was perceived as having a marked sense of studying, investigation and pedagogic action, a wide and deep positive vision of problems, in which should be grounded the exercise of the art – thought that he implemented and developed until his retirement (1975).

In the meantime, in 1941, João de Mello was appointed as first Assistant of the Medical Department of Santo Antonio Hospital. It starts then what would be his main work whose permanence in Santo Antonio General Hospital, even when the medical school was withdrawn to the magnificent premises of St João Hospital, would become the main catalyst of the renewal and enrichment of the hospital medical clinic, not only in the caring aspects that he implemented to the highest standards but also regarding post-graduation training that he has always nurtured in an effective and direct way.

He became a Service Director and was the first Director of the Medical Department.

In conditions which were strongly precarious and in an incipient institutional organization, from of small group of young doctors, bright and committed that he called to work on his side, or near him, tried to benefit from the only medical internship in the north of the country. João de Mello, listening and stimulating, supporting and following through, demanding and trusting, led to the implementation- that still ongoing today – of the quality, development and



differentiation of the medical area in the “old” Santo Antonio Hospital.

Such lifework, which was a great part of his life, has grown, flourished, gave fruits and it is still alive in at least three services of his Hospital and also by many doctors who graduated there at several levels of structures of the region healthcare.

He was member of the Local Board of the Medical Association (1947 – 49) having a driving role in medical structures in the Medical Social Services.

One day (1975) with the same serene and smiling natural attitude of always, abiding by the law, passed his torch to the safe hands he had thought ... He died on the 11th September 1978, few days before reaching 73 years of age.

He was born in Cedofeita Borough, on the 29 September 1905.

There is no picture or frame that can match the so much we owe to him. ■