



In Memoriam

Dr., Alberto Morales Salinas (Cuba 1972-2019)

by Jaume Marrugat, Head of REGICOR Cardiovascular Epidemiology at IMIM and CIBERCV, Barcelona, Spain.* (Curr Probl Cardiol 2020;45:100657.)

In 2004, I received an email from Dr. Alberto Morales in which he asked my advice on his research related to achieving general practitioner specialization in Cuba. That was the beginning of several months of stimulating correspondence with this dedicated young clinician and researcher. In May 2006, I finally had the opportunity to meet him in person when I attended a Hypertension Congress in Santa Clara, Cuba. I enjoyed his personal hospitality, including visits to the Che Guevara Mausoleum in Santa Clara and to several Hemingway sites in Old Havana –his hotel room at *Ambos Mundos* (“Both Worlds”) and the bar-restaurants *La Bodeguita del Medio* and *La Floridita*, where we enjoyed a daiquiri alongside Hemingway’s statue seated at the bar. Alberto also introduced me to his wife, Yisel Villanueva (a hospital pharmacist), and his mother, Elisa Salinas (a high school teacher). With the first words of the conversation, I recognized that this was a highly educated and knowledgeable atmosphere.

That first in-person contact and our medical and scientific discussions showed me Alberto’s genuine enthusiasm and talent. It was the beginning of a fruitful collaboration as colleagues and a friendship that has been ended far too soon.

Dr. Alberto Morales Salinas was born in Cuba on September 17, 1972. After receiving his medical degree, he worked in a primary care center for 10 years (1996-2005). He then received excellent advanced training at Universidad Médica de Villa Clara, Cuba, first specializing in general medicine (2006) and later in cardiology (2009). He developed a distinguished hospital career at Cardiocentro Che Guevara at Santa Clara, Cuba (2005-2019).

Conflicts of interest: I have no conflict of interest in writing this in memoriam of Dr. Alberto Morales Salinas.
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In 2007, he received Cuba's "Best Young Scientist in the Medical Sciences" award, a recognition of his precocity in biomedical research and his talent. In 2008, he joined my Cardiovascular Epidemiology Team as a Visiting Scholar at IMIM-Hospital del Mar in Barcelona. In those months, he proved to be an avid sponge, soaking up new knowledge to quickly become an expert in cardiovascular risk functions. He also captivated my team with his charming ways. His beloved son Kevin was born that same year, after his return to Cuba. Alberto later obtained a Master's degree in Cardiology Imaging at Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche in Alicante, Spain.

Alberto had a vocation for Preventive Medicine, which he applied to hypertension by combining his cardiology expertise with best practices in cardiovascular risk estimation. His membership on the board of Cuba's National Hypertension Group gave him an effective means to continuously move preventive strategies forward. A member of the 2016-2017 World Heart Federation Emerging Leaders cohort, he was also named a Lown Scholar in the School of Public Health at Harvard University in 2017.

He was an Associate Professor and Researcher at Medical University of Villa Clara and Chair of Teaching on the board of Cuba's National Cardiology Group. In 2017, he took on international leadership roles as a member of the Task Force of the Latin American Society on Hypertension and as chair of the International Consensus on mild hypertension in the low-moderate cardiovascular risk group. In these roles, he led the development of several publications –the last of which is published here.

Dozens of publications and a plethora of testimonies from grateful patients and international colleagues show Alberto's talent, tenacity, and humanity. He labored with love and ceaseless energy to help preserve the health of his country's citizens. Academic achievements can be counted, offering an objective measurement of a medical scientist's success. Recognition by the community and by colleagues is a measure of human quality and capacity to translate knowledge into action: Alberto had both when he left us at just 46 years of age. We will keep him in our memory, and certainly in our hearts.

May he rest in peace.

*REGICOR stands for *Registre Gironí del Cor* or Girona Heart Registry, IMIM for Institute of Biomedical Research at Hospital del Mar, and CIBERCV for Biomedical Research Networking Center on Cardiovascular Diseases.

