

INSIGHTS



In memory of a brilliant neuroneonatologist and dazzling human being: Dr. Alfredo García-Alix

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Alfredo García-Alix was one of the foremost leaders in Clinical Neonatal Neurology. He passed away at home in Barcelona, Spain, peacefully, after a prolonged illness, on September 8, 2024, at the age of 68.

Alfredo's entire career was marked by inspiration, vision, creativity, and a devotion to the care of newborn infants, particularly those with neurological disorders. As important, his clinical care of babies and families was always based in respect, humanism, empathy and ethics.

Alfredo graduated from medical school in 1980 from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. He was a Pediatric Resident at Hospital Universitario La Paz, Madrid and then became a neonatologist in 1987. He subsequently went to the Neonatal Neurology Research Program at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, where he was a Research Fellow in Neonatal Neurology under Professor Joe Volpe (1988–1990) and performed his doctoral thesis on neurological morbidity of the newborn with intrapartum fetal stress markers.

Alfredo has been a prominent health professional in the field of Neonatal Neurology. He dedicated himself with passion and perseverance to the study of neonatal hypoxic-ischemic brain lesions and brain development disorders in a comprehensive and humanized way. His commitment to the education of pediatricians in training and to research has been clearly reflected in actions. Among his published books are three original ones of great value, essential for the evaluation and practice of neonatal neurology: *General Movements of the newborn and Infant* (A García Alix, J Arnáez Solís, 2022), *Neurological Evaluation of the Newborn* (A García Alix, J Quero, 2011), and *Neonatal Neurology at a Glance* (A García Alix, J Arnáez Solís, 2021). Likewise, he has published the

book *Genetics for Neurologists* and numerous chapters and editorials in various textbooks and magazines. For example: *Acquired Brain Damage in Neonatology*. Finally, he is the author of more than 100 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals. At the end of this "In Memoriam" we cite some of these articles from recent years.

Alfredo has worked at the Maternal and Child Hospital of Gran Canarias, at the La Paz University Hospital in Madrid and at the Sant Joan de Déu Hospital in Barcelona. He has been Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Gran Canaria, the Autonomous University of Madrid and the University of Barcelona.

Since 2014 he has been president of the NeNe Foundation, a non-profit organization for training, research and dissemination of neurological problems in newborns. The NeNe Foundation is currently a meeting point between medical professionals, families and society, aware that neurological problems acquired in the neonatal period have an enormous impact on health, as well as enormous suffering for families and social impact.

Alfredo has been part of the Ibero-American Society of Neonatology (SIBEN) for more than ten years, he is an honorary member, a full professor of the Academic Career at SIBEN and a member of the Advisory Body. He has participated and educated with enthusiasm and passion through multiple conferences, workshops and courses. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, Alfredo is a deep friend of SIBEN.

Alfredo has always considered that education and professional training are the best strategy to change the reality of our little patients and, in short, he said: "To make the already tormented world in which we live a little better."

He was always supported by his wife and faithful companion Nuria, in Canarias, in Barcelona and in their beautiful home in Cabra del Camp, a little village in Tarragona, Flooded with deep sadness we will no longer be able to listen to him again in a conference or workshop, exuding passion to transmit his immense wisdom. However, we will continue reading it and remembering its indelible messages. Every neonatal health professional has learned from him how to do and be better in caring for sick children and their families.

Alfredo will be sorely missed by the many who knew him personally and the countless physicians whose understanding of their specialty was enhanced by his discoveries and teachings. His valuable generosity, selfless and altruistic, will persist forever in our hearts.

14 of the more than 100 relevant articles published by Alfredo during 2021–2024:

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1. Temporal Trends in the Severity and Mortality of Neonatal Hypoxic-Ischemic Encephalopathy in the Era of Hypothermia (Neonatology. 2021;118(6):685–692).
2. Neuromonitoring of the extremely preterm infant (An Pediatr (Engl Ed). 2021;95(6):395–396).
3. Development, Reliability, and Testing of a New Rating Scale for Neonatal Encephalopathy (J Pediatr. 2021;235:83–91.e7).
4. Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy in Units Reporting to the Ibero-American Society of Neonatology Network: Prevalence and Mortality (MEDICC Rev. 2021;23(1):30–34).
5. Usefulness of video recordings for validating neonatal encephalopathy exams: a population-based cohort study (Arch Dis Child Fetal Neonatal Ed. 2021 Sep;106(5):522–528).
6. Value of brain damage biomarkers in cerebrospinal fluid in neonates with hypoxic-ischemic brain injury. (Biomark Med. 2022 Jan 27. doi: 10.2217/bmm-2021-0381).
7. Stem cells in the horizon of the treatment of the neonatal arterial ischemic infarction (An Pediatr (Engl Ed). 2022 Dec;97(6):373–374).
8. Neuron-specific enolase in cerebrospinal fluid as a biomarker of brain damage in infants with hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy (Neural Regen Res. 2022 Feb;17(2):318–319).
9. Breastfeeding duration is associated with larger cortical gray matter volumes in children from the ABCD study (Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2023 ;64(7):1067–1079).
10. CSF neopterin and beta-2-microglobulin as inflammation biomarkers in newborns with hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy (Pediatr Res. 2023 Apr;93(5):1328–1335).
11. Thrombin, protein C, and protein S values in mother-infant dyads in the postpartum period (An Pediatr (Engl Ed). 2023 May;98(5):338–343).
12. Massive Neonatal Arterial Ischemic Stroke (Pediatric Neurology 2023; 144 5e10).
13. Incidence of encephalopathy and comorbidity in infants with perinatal asphyxia: a comparative prospective cohort study (Front Pediatr. 2024; 27;12:1363576).
14. Hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy code: A systematic review for resource-limited settings. (An Pediatr (Engl Ed). 2024;100(4): 275–286).

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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