

JOSE VEROCCAY - "Prague's pathologist". The history of a Latin-American doctor

Ronell Bologna-Molina¹, Gabriela Vigil-Bastitta¹, Vanesa Pereira-Prado¹, Leonel Elola-Verocay²

¹Molecular Pathology Area, Faculty of Dentistry, Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay.

²Faculty of Psychology, Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay.

SUMMARY

José Verocay (Paysandú 1876 – Eichwald/Dubí, Bohemia 1927) was a Uruguayan anatomopathologist, recognized worldwide as "Prague's pathologist" (Fig. 1). In 1910, he described, for the first time, the morphological structure later called Verocay's bodies, which are used for diagnosing schwannoma. He spent the end of the XIXth century and the beginning of XXth century in Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague. During the last years of his life, he tried unsuccessfully to reintegrate himself into the Uruguayan academic community. In 1927, he passed away in Eichwald, Teplitz district, Bohemia.

Keywords: Prague's pathologist – Verocay y – Verocay's bodies

JOSE VEROCCAY - "Pražský patolog".

SOUHRN

Jose Verocay (1876 – 1927) byl uruguayský lékař, celosvětově známý jako „Pražský patolog“.

Na přelomu 19. a 20. století působil v patologicko-anatomickém ústavu na pražské německé lékařské fakultě. V roce 1910 jako první popsal struktury diagnostické pro schwannom později nazývané Verocayova tělíska. Po 1. světové válce se vrátil do Uruguaye, kde se pokoušel o zařazení do akademické komunity, titul profesora však nezískal. Kvůli zdravotním problémům se rozhodl vrátit do Evropy, kde v roce 1927 v Dubí u Teplic umírá.

Klíčová slova: Pražský patolog – Verocay – Verocayova tělíska

Cesk Patol 2018; 54(3): 147–150

HIS LIFE AND HIS SIGNIFICANCE FOR PATHOLOGY

"...I liked anatomy and I dedicated myself to it. As I understand that men, for being efficient, must dedicate to few things, I dedicated myself completely to the subject I liked. You can't be everything and I want to be somebody..." (1,2). With these words, Verocay defined his vocation for anatomopathology, a philosophy that would take him far.

José Verocay was a Uruguayan anatomopathologist whose personal and scientific development mainly occurred in Europe at the end of the XIXth century and beginning of the XXth century, in Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague. In 1910, he gained international recognition by describing, for the first time, a morphological structure that later would be called "Verocay's bodies", used for diagnosing schwannoma (even though these bodies are not only present in schwannomas).

A typical Verocay's body consists of a stacked arrangement of two rows of elongated palisading nuclei alternating with acellular zones composed of cytoplasmic processes called Schwann cells (3).

Verocay's bodies showing horizontal rows of palisading nuclei, separated by acellular zones on a basal membrane, rose colored (3).

Schwannomas, previously known as neurilemmomas and neurinomas of Verocay, are tumors of the peripheral nerve sheath derived from myelinating cells of the peripheral nervous



Fig. 1. Juan José Verocay, Prague's Pathologist. (1)

system, which are composed almost entirely of Schwann cells; they usually grow inside a capsule and remain peripheral (3).

"Neuromas" was a denomination taken for the group of tumors of the neural sheath, introduced in 1803 by Louis Odier. This group of tumors were then differentiated thanks to Verocay's histological observations.

Patients with phakomatosis exhibited tumors that were later called "neuro-fibromas", name introduced by von Recklinghausen. Verocay called them neurinomas, and Arthur Purdy Stout referred to them as neurilemmomas later on in 1935.

✉ Correspondence address:

Vanesa Pereira-Prado
Gral Las Heras 1925, 11600 Montevideo,
tel.: +598 95 896 043,
e-mail: vanesapereira91@hotmail.com