



Farewell, dear colleague and friend Alberto José de Araújo (August 28, 1954 – September 7, 2021)

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This is a huge loss and a challenging opportunity: to summarize the career of and make a tribute to an exponent of tobacco control in Brazil.

Dr. Araújo graduated from the respected *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) School of Medicine (1979) and specialized in Occupational Medicine at Fluminense Federal University (1995), in Social Medicine and Public Health at *Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca*, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (1982) and in Sanitary Pulmonology at National Department of Sanitary Pulmonology at the same Foundation (1983). He was a fellow in Environmental and Occupational Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NY, USA (2000).⁽¹⁾ He earned both his Master's and Doctoral Degrees from *Instituto Alberto Luiz Coimbra de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa de Engenharia/UFRJ*.⁽¹⁾ His doctoral thesis was on the cost-effectiveness of smoking cessation interventions in Brazil (2008).⁽¹⁾

On February 2, 2003, the *Núcleo de Estudos e Tratamento do Tabagismo* (NETT, Center for the Study and Treatment of Smokers) was created at UFRJ.⁽²⁾ The coordination of the center was initially assigned to Prof. Carlos Alberto de Barros Franco. Professionals were trained to work in the Smoking Cessation Program—an outpatient care clinic.⁽²⁾ After Prof. Barros Franco's retirement in May of 2003, the program began to be coordinated by Dr. Alberto Araújo.⁽²⁾ Thanks to Alberto and the NETT team's efforts, the center has gained public recognition and is today considered one of the country's reference sites in smoking cessation treatment and discussion of tobacco control policies. NETT hosts annual workshops on tobacco control strategies held by the Brazilian National Cancer Institute, the Pan American Health Organization, Johns Hopkins University, and seminars held by the Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.⁽²⁾

Honoring the tradition of pulmonologists leading tobacco control in Brazil, Alberto followed the iconic José Rosenberg's and Mário Rigatto's steps, but imprinting his own style, being extremely qualified and connected. Since 2019, he was the President of the Tobacco Control Section of the Brazilian Medical Association, being a member since 2010. He was also a member of the Licit & Illicit Drugs Committee of the Federal Council of Medicine.⁽¹⁾

Dr. Alberto Araújo participated in the elaboration of the 2004 and 2008 *Sociedade Brasileira de Pneumologia e Tisiologia* (SBPT, Brazilian Thoracic Association) Guidelines for Smoking Cessation Treatment, and also acted as a reviewer for the 2008 Guidelines. He organized two

important SBPT compilations on smoking: the 2012 SBPT Manual of Conduct and Practices in Smoking⁽³⁾ and the book "Smoking: Prevention and Treatment,"⁽⁴⁾ released earlier this year.

The name *Alberto* is of Germanic origin, derived from *Adalbert*. It originated in Portugal in the 12th century.⁽⁵⁾ Alberto means "brilliant nobleman" or "illustrious nobleman."⁽⁵⁾ Brilliant was Alberto indeed. A great strategist, he mastered like no one else the art of articulating and building bridges.

The meeting of one of us (PCRPC) with Alberto took place in the First Brazilian Congress on Smoking and Health, held in the city of Rio de Janeiro, in the now distant year of 2005. Reciprocal empathy and fraternal friendship germinated and hatched in a variety of ways: we participated in the World Health Organization mission to assess the Brazilian capacity for tobacco control in 2008; we cowrote *Respira Brasil*,⁽⁶⁾ a publication we developed together at the request of the Pan American Health Organization, published at the end of 2011; and shared the management of the SBPT Tobacco Control Section in the 2011-2012 biennium.

I (JMC) have been asked when and how my encounter with Alberto happened. Before answering this question, I will bring you some considerations about "our Alberto". Sorry for my petulance in using the term "our Alberto," but as a former President of the SBPT, I dare to say it is a demonstration of affection from all Brazilian Pulmonologists.

Honestly, I do not remember a special moment of that encounter. I really believe that brothers and friends do not remember when they start to share ideas and ideals. It seems that we have always been side by side, exchanging suggestions several times a week in person, over the phone, via emails, or other media. Actually, we were looking for solutions to the countless operational difficulties regarding the smoking issue that we would have to face.

Our Alberto quickly went from being an enthusiastic contributor to initiatives related to the fight against smoking to becoming an artisan of countless achievements, introducing innovative aspects in most of his proposals.

I need to mention that Alberto and I worked with colleagues from the SBPT boards in the 2017-18, 2019-20, and 2021-22 biennia to produce a guide on smoking control containing the minimum points that all medical students should know. This proposal seemed very timely to all of us in a period when many medical schools in Brazil have no pulmonologists, but mostly internists, who are not

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always prepared for the challenge of dealing with this specific and very difficult topic. Later on, this project was expanded to the Latin American Thoracic Association, the Spanish Society of Pulmonology and Thoracic Surgery, and the Portuguese Pulmonology Society, targeting all Latin American and Iberian countries (Spain and Portugal).⁽⁷⁾ The COVID-19 pandemic made us delay the implementation of this proposal.

So, writing about this very special person when we are still shaken by his loss was not difficult, as we all have something to say about him. We are aware of his huge list of professional qualities of the highest level and also of his affable, aggregating, and sometimes even romantic personality.

Alberto, the humanist poet, kept a website (<https://ajaraujo.com.br>). There he associated his texts with photos of famous canvases. A master at writing acrostics, his texts continue to be pulsating and relevant today, such as "Terra Brasilis – do golpe a la carte," written in 1996.⁽⁸⁾

Alberto, the political being, left us on a patriotic date: last September 7th. Perhaps it was a final act of symbolism, as he understood that the march of Brazilian democracy was unstable and went down pathways that he felt that were inappropriate.

Farewell, dear Alberto, we will all miss your presentations at SBPT events and the many good conversations in the corridors and at dinner parties.

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