

Galileo Galilei and the property of naming light spots

1610. January seven. It is nighttime in Padua. Galileo Galilei begins to record his observations on stars and, more precisely, on the satellites of the planet Jupiter, which he called “Medicean Stars” in honor of the family of Florence Grand Dukes, the Medici. This can be considered the inaugural step of Modern Astronomy, characterized by the beginning of the use of scientific observation tools, mathematical language, and publication of the results.

Exactly four centuries later, its remembrance is pertinent, since I was invited to write an Editorial for this edition of the *Brazilian Journal of Rheumatology*, which, among several relevant articles, presents us a report on a new clinical diagnostic test. When the Directives on Lumbalgias and Lumbosciatalgias was published in this same Journal (Vol. 48 – March/April 2008), I suggested it should be called after its “inventor”, professor Hamid Alexandre Cecin, as “Cecin’s Sign” instead of “X Sign”.

In the conclusion of “Cecin’s Sign (“X” Sign): improving the diagnosis of radicular compression by herniated lumbar disks”, the author demonstrates that it is easy to perform, has high sensitivity and negative predictive value, and its performance is superior to that of Lasègue’s sign in cases of symptomatic herniated lumbar disks, not forgetting to alert that the validation of this procedure in medical practice and its role in other disorders should be better investigated in prospective studies.

In the course of pleasant conversations with one of our more experienced professors, Adil Muhib Samara, he has criticized, more than once, our historical flaw in recording discoveries;

examples abound, such as the invention, by Brazilian priests, of the prototypes of the radio, by Landell de Moura, and typewriter, by Francisco João de Azevedo. Many things also got lost in the Medical Sciences, disrespecting not only aspects of authorship, but also the importance of reproducibility.

The homage to professor Cecin, by suggesting naming his discovery after him, does not configure individual exaltation. This gesture goes beyond it. The production of knowledge is not only a result of mere contemplation, but also of an active relationship of exchange among men and between man and this world. And it also translates a stage of development.

If the mention to the “birth of science” and Galileo Galilei, motivated more by the four hundred years since the event seems exaggerated, our salute to the *Brazilian Journal of Rheumatology*, its editors, Mittermeyer Barreto Santiago and Ricardo Fuller, and the author, doctor Cecin, is not improper. This discovery is relevant because it allies clinical applicability, at a time in which countless expensive tests are available, to a dignifying example of proper observation, validated by adequate tools, and the necessary and welcome divulgation.

In Porto Alegre, Brazil, in another January, but now in 2010, remembering that planets, satellites, and stars are only points of light on the firmament, it is patent that with the current edition of this journal we take another step to build an identity, which strengthens the state of the art of Brazilian rheumatology.

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