Dear Editor,

With great interest we read the article by Novis and colleagues recently published in *Arquivos de Neuro-Psiquiatria*. Where they present the life and work of Professor Faustino Esposel, considered the father of Brazilian neurology, who along with Antônio Austregésilo, described a substitute sign for Babinski’s phenomenon eliciting of the extensor plantar response upon squeezing of the thigh: "Le phénomene de Babinski, provoqué par l’excitation de la cuisse", now known as the Austregésilo-Esposel sign. Upon a search of the literature, we were unable to find recent visual documentation of the sign. Therefore, to illustrate the excellent article by Novis and colleagues, we considered it appropriate to present the case of a patient with stroke in whom the Austregésilo-Esposel sign was present, along with the Babinski, Chaddock, and Oppenheim signs.

An 89-year-old female with a long-standing history of untreated hypertension, presents to the emergency department 7 hours after sudden-onset of mutism and right hemiparesis. Neurological examination reveals global aphasia, right dense hemiplegia (0/5 in Modified Research Council scale), with hyperactive deep tendon reflexes and abnormal plantar responses (Figure 1), with toe extension on squeezing of the thigh (Figure 2): the Austregésilo-Esposel sign. A non-contrast enhanced computed tomography of the brain revealed a large left-hemispheric stroke (Figure 3). Etiological work up for the

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**Figure 1.** Signs eliciting extensor plantar response. Toe extension on stroking the sole of the foot (Babinski, 1), the lateral aspect of the foot (Chaddock, 2) and downward stroking of the tibia (Oppenheim, 3).
cause of stroke ruled out cardiac embolism sources, large-artery, and small-vessel disease, and was thus classified as an embolic stroke of unknown source (ESUS)³.

With over 30 surrogate or substitute signs for the original Babinski sign⁴, it has become a common rite of passage in some centers to test trainees on how many signs they can remember. Despite their widespread use as markers of corticospinal disease, their diagnostic yield remains controversial; and their sensitivity for detecting pyramidal tract dysfunction and inter observer agreement remains low⁵. Thus, regardless of the eponym remembered when eliciting the plantar response, it is paramount to interpret it in the patient’s context and not in isolation.

**SUPPLEMENTARY FILES**

The following material is available online for this letter:


**REFERENCES**


