

Editorial

José Alonso del Hoyo and the historical development of maxillofacial surgery in Spain

José alonso del hoyo y la construcción histórica de la cirugía maxilofacial en España

The establishment of Maxillofacial Surgery as a specialty in Spain, officially recognized in April 1977, was the culmination of a particularly active prior evolution throughout the mid-20th century. More than a mere administrative extension of dentistry, the new discipline took shape as the need to address oral, maxillary, facial, and cervical pathology, as well as its surgical reconstruction, in a unified manner became evident, in a field that exceeded the traditional competencies of other medical disciplines. From its historical beginnings, Professor José Ramón Alonso del Hoyo was among those clinicians who early on grasped the anatomical and functional unity of the maxillofacial region.

Long before its legal recognition, teams capable of treating oral tumors, facial trauma, congenital malformations, surgical pathology of the temporomandibular joint, and complex reconstructive procedures were already working in our country, demonstrating that clinical practice was ahead of the established norm. Pavilion 8 of the Complutense University of Madrid's Faculty of Medicine occupied a pivotal position, as it was there, under the impetus of Professor Lafuente Chaos, that a surgical super-specialization environment was created. Dr. Víctor Sada Tejero assumed leadership of the Maxillofacial Surgery section, later joined by Dr. Alonso del Hoyo. Pavilion 8 served as a breeding ground for training and clinical experience, attracting physicians from diverse backgrounds who would later hold prominent positions in other public hospitals nationwide (Figure 1).

However, the true consolidation of this pioneering experience occurred when it achieved a permanent integration within the hospital structure. At this time, the State Charity Hospital (later the La Princesa University Hospital) became a leading institution, as in 1961 the former Dentistry Service was



Figure 1. Doctors Víctor Sada and Alonso del Hoyo, during one of the more than 500 maxillofacial surgery procedures performed in Pavilion 8 of the Faculty of Medicine at the Complutense University of Madrid over seven years, surrounded by numerous visiting physicians seeking to learn the techniques of this new surgical medical discipline.

transformed into the Stomatology Service, headed by Professor José Alonso del Hoyo, and subsequently into the Maxillofacial Surgery Service, with its activity now unequivocally surgical. Dr. Ramón Castillo, Dr. Ignacio Sierra, and other stomatologists then joined the staff. In 1964, the La Paz University Hospital opened, and the team, led by Dr. Sada, moved there, with the exception of Dr. Alonso del Hoyo, who obtained the position of Head of Section (through competitive examination) at the La Princesa Hospital. Therefore, there were only two hospitals in

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Madrid that developed Maxillofacial Surgery from their inception. Clinical practice began with very limited resources, no assigned beds, no dedicated anesthesiologist, and no specific surgical equipment, so some of the instruments were provided by the physicians themselves. Far from being a minor anecdote, this scenario reflects the extent to which the establishment of the specialty in Spain rested, for years, on the personal determination of its pioneers and their conviction that they were responding to a genuine healthcare need (Figure 2). Dr. Alonso del Hoyo was later appointed Head of Service, implementing new activities and relying on the assistance of Dr. Félix Hidalgo, a general surgery resident and stomatologist, and subsequently, residents with formal training through the MIR (Medical Residency) program. He continued as Head of Service until 1992, when he was succeeded by another of his students, Dr. Francisco Javier Díaz González.

From this care base, an intense academic activity was also developed which proved decisive in giving legitimacy to the new discipline, as a result of which he was appointed Full Professor of Surgery by the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (UAM). Courses with a theoretical-practical orientation were promoted, collaborators from different parts of the country joined the team, and scientific and audiovisual materials were produced to disseminate techniques, indications, and results.



Figure 2. Newspaper clipping from the time (*La Voz de España*) highlighting the pioneering advances in Maxillofacial Surgery in Spain, thanks to José Alonso del Hoyo and others, who the specialty gave its first steps.

In this way, the service not only resolved complex cases but also functioned as a true training center, a fact that helps explain the subsequent connection of highly relevant figures in the specialty with that pioneering environment. Evidence of this activity is that the Hospital de La Princesa hosted visits from foreign professors, as well as Latin American students, and Dr. Alonso del Hoyo participated in more than 20 trips to Latin America as a visiting professor to teach topics related to the new discipline (Figure 3).

This educational dimension was linked to the creation, with Dr. Alonso del Hoyo among its founding members and Dr. Sada as president, of the Spanish Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (SECOM) in 1965. SECOM represented a qualitative leap in the maturation of the specialty, providing a framework for scientific exchange, technical discussion, and professional affirmation. Furthermore, the fact that this society was established five years before the European Association for Cranio-Maxillo-Facial Surgery (EACMFS) reflects the level of organizational maturity achieved by the Spanish group at a still early stage in the international development of the discipline. SECOM also spearheaded the integration of daily clinical practice with the promotion of courses, the public projection of the specialty, and its consolidation within scientific journals. Taken together, all these elements were part of a recognizable strategy: to transform a still poorly understood practice into a specialty with its own field of action, public visibility, and institutional legitimacy. Similarly, the launch of the *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* in 1979 (later the *Ibero-American Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*) and the proliferation of national and international scientific meetings proved essential for the standardization of the specialty in Spain.

The international recognition achieved by Professor Alonso del Hoyo and, in general, by the Spanish group was extraordinary. Attendance at European courses and congresses, contact with international experts, and Spanish involvement in the creation of the EACMFS in 1970 demonstrate that the growth of the specialty in Spain occurred through ongoing dialogue with the most advanced trends in Europe. In 1984, he became president of the EACMFS, and in 1986, he organized



Figure 3. Professor Alonso del Hoyo, pictured with the Paraguayan Minister of Health, after being invited as an official speaker in 1975.

the VIII European Congress of the EACMFS in Madrid, with 800 participants from 35 countries. All of this contributed to projecting Spanish maxillofacial surgery onto a plane of undeniable international visibility (Figures 4, 5 and 6).

An essential part of its contribution is related to the consolidation of the Maxillofacial Surgery Department at La Princesa Hospital as an advanced and academically fertile healthcare structure. In the following decades, this center achieved particularly significant milestones, including the creation of the first Spanish orthognathic surgery unit, the establishment of a pioneering temporomandibular joint pathology unit using arthroscopy, and the formation of one of the first European banks of freeze-dried cartilage, along with other innovative surgical techniques and procedures for their time. In this sense, the hospital acted as a true institutional testing ground where organizational models, teaching strategies, and surgical procedures were developed that foreshadowed the subsequent maturity of the specialty in Spain.



Figure 4. Her Majesty Queen Sofia with Professor Alonso del Hoyo at the opening of the VIII Congress of the European Association for Cranio-Maxillofacial Surgery (EACMFS), held in Madrid in 1986.



Figure 5. Professor Alonso del Hoyo, as Past President of the EACMFS, with Queen Fabiola of Belgium, at the opening of the X Congress of the European Association for Cranio-Maxillofacial Surgery (EACMFS), held in Brussels in 1990.

In short, Spanish Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery was built upon the convergence of clinical rigor, a dedication to teaching, and cooperation among colleagues, in addition to a clear sense of hospital service. Professor Alonso del Hoyo was a clinical pioneer of a surgical specialty focused on the comprehensive treatment of the oral and maxillofacial region; an institutional builder of a stable hospital service; a teacher committed to



Primer Symposium Internacional sobre el Tratamiento de Deformidades Faciales

N. M.

Durante los días 25, 26 y 27 de junio se ha celebrado en el Hospital de la Princesa de Madrid el primer Symposium sobre el Tratamiento de las Deformidades Dentofaciales, dirigido por el Dr. Alonso del Hoyo, profesor de Cirugía Maxilofacial de la Facultad de Medicina Autónoma.

HAN participado en este Symposium como 180 especialistas y como profesores invitados, los doctores Sailer (Suiza), Sfinhauser (Alemania), Ortiz Monasterio (México), Bell (EE.UU.), Schadeva (EE.UU.), Cadenat (Francia), y Le-vignac (Francia), Giardino (Italia).

En el Symposium se han expuesto los últimos avances tanto en el diagnóstico como en el plan de tratamiento y técnicas actuales para la corrección de las deformidades dentofaciales. No se han tratado las grandes deformidades craneofaciales, sino solamente aquellas dismorfias que, sin ser graves, son capaces de determinar disarmonías en el rostro más o menos ostensibles con desproporciones en la posición, volumen y tamaño de los distintos huesos que componen el esqueleto facial. Ello lleva consigo generalmente también una maloclusión dentaria y una maloclusión concomitante.

Algunos de los temas expuestos han sido: «La repercusión de la cirugía en el crecimiento facial», «El papel de la lengua en las deformidades», «La integración del ortodoncista en el tratamiento de las deformidades», «Las asimetrías faciales», «El mentón», «La displasia vertical», «La articulación temporomandibular en las deformidades» y «La cirugía complementaria a las osteotomías» etcétera. La participación del ortodoncista en estos tratamientos es hoy día inquestionable, tanto en la evaluación diagnóstica de los casos, como en la

ortodóncia prequirúrgica y otra postquirúrgica para conseguir una correcta y equilibrada oclusión dentaria.

Otro de los aspectos tratados y que es de mucho interés es la repercusión de las osteotomías en la función de las articulaciones temporomandibulares y asimismo, la corrección de algunas artropatías o algunas disfunciones mediante la movilización de los huesos faciales. En este sentido el equipo del Hospital de la Princesa ha presentado dos trabajos de investigación, uno experimental y otro clínico, con evaluaciones mediante resonancia magnética y artroscopias temporomandibulares.

Las osteotomías generalmente múltiples de los huesos faciales no pueden llevar sólo a resultados de corrección estática verificados en unas radiografías o fotografías. Se trata de modificar también toda la dinámica facial como es el tipo de sonrisa y el resto de funciones encomendadas a los músculos de la cara, que le confiere a esta cirugía un concepto integral de rehabilitación facial. Por ello se ha incorporado últimamente a las osteotomías propiamente dichas otras técnicas como son la liposucción de la región submental, lipectomías genianas o inclusiones de relleno en distintas áreas mediante el empleo del cartílago o biomateriales de distintos tipos.

Las ganancias psicológicas en la mayoría de los enfermos intervenidos de estas deformidades justifica el desarrollo de esta moderna cirugía y todos los avances que en ella se están

Figure 6. Newspaper clipping highlighting the 1st International Symposium on the Treatment of Facial Deformities, held at La Princesa Hospital, with the participation of internationally renowned speakers, now considered classic figures in the field, such as Doctors Bell (USA), Ortiz Monasterio (Mexico), and Sailer (Switzerland), among others.

training new generations; and, finally, a representative of the Spanish specialty in national and international forums. But it is not the magnitude of the figure, but the greatness of the person that is reflected in his own words, which I have had the honor of hearing in person: *"The prestige achieved by Maxillofacial Surgery in Spain is the result of the enthusiasm, dedication, and effort of the various hospitals that, with varying degrees of difficulty, incorporated this specialty into the field of surgery, and it can never be attributed to the work of a single individual, but rather to that of committed teams"*.

In an era like the present, characterized by hyper-specialization and rapid technological innovation, looking back at that foundational process can help reinforce the professional memory of the discipline, identifying in his figure one of the founding fathers of our specialty. This editorial serves as our tribute.

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