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The legacy of the Nacional Center in Matanzas' 40 years

La impronta de los 40 años del Centro Nacional de Toxicología en Matanzas

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Dear readers:

The World Health Organization establishes the creation of poison control centers through a guideline for the fight against poisonings, due to their increase in recent years. They are related to the scientific-technical development achieved by man and the appearance of numerous chemical substances ^(1,2,3). In this regard, this editorial intends to analyze the imprint of the 40 years of the National Toxicology Center in Matanzas province, highlighting aspects of care, academics, research, and management.

In Cuba, in 1985, the foundations were laid for the creation and development of the National Toxicology Center (Cenatox), under the protection of Resolution No. 253 of the Minister of Public Health. One year later, on November 15, 1986, the National Toxicology Center was inaugurated. This tertiary-level institution has among its missions the toxicological advisory service to the country's health institutions and the population, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day ⁽⁴⁾.

In the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the country's first Toxicology specialists were trained at the "Serguei Mironovich Kirov" Military Medical Academy ⁽⁴⁾. Among these professionals is Dr. Rafael Peláez Rodríguez, from the Perico municipality, Matanzas. Professor Peláez Rodríguez was the first Toxicology specialist in the province, despite working as a founding physician of Cenatox.

In 1992, teaching began at the center, through courses, diplomas, and a master's degree. Among the first Matanzas residents to take the Diploma in Clinical Toxicology were Dr. Blanca Piedra Herrera (1992), Dr. José C. Alfonso Prince (1993), and Dr. Avelino Plat García (1995). Drs. Melvis B. Martínez Almodovar (2001), Idalmis Rodríguez Fernández, and Leticia Díaz González (2003) completed the Master's degree in Clinical Toxicology.

In 2011, the training of the first Toxicology residents trained in the country began, with professionals from the Medical Services of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. Among these, two Toxicology specialists graduated from the first class in 2013, who have been working as toxicologists in a health institution from that time to the present ⁽⁵⁾. In 2015, the first specialist from the Public Health System graduated, Dr. Yanioba Ferrales Romero, who worked at the Faustino Pérez Provincial Hospital.

It should be noted that the training of these professionals is a strength for the provincial territory, as among their responsibilities is toxicological assurance in the province. Among their missions are the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of situations where chemical substances are the protagonists, in addition to the timely assessment of the acutely poisoned patient in health institutions.

In relation to research, the link with the training institution (Cenatox) is maintained through participation in courses, workshops, and scientific conferences. The contribution of toxicologists to other scientific events in the province is also evident.

According to the authors, during the various events that have shaken the province, the country, and, why not mention, even the world, Toxicology specialists have been on the front line to provide the necessary advice to decision-makers in situations of chemical accidents (CA) or mass poisonings (MP). Among these, the following can be mentioned: CA as a result of the ammonia train derailment, the MP due to domestic recklessness in Manguito ⁽⁶⁾, the CA as a consequence of the fire at the supertanker base ^(7,8,9), and the chemical emergency due to irritant gases at the José Luis Dubrocq Urban Pre-University Institute ⁽¹⁰⁾. On the other hand, it is necessary to mention the Ecotoxicological Surveillance System being developed in the Calimete municipality, Matanzas, to monitor the varieties of transgenic corn and soybeans released into the environment ⁽¹¹⁾.

In the last year, by indication of the Ministry of Public Health and the National Toxicology Group, the first Diploma in Toxicology was taught in the province, with the participation of 12 professionals from different municipalities and specialties working in Primary and Secondary Care. To commemorate the 40 decades of Cenatox and its imprint on the province, work is underway to create the Provincial Toxicology Group. On the other hand, this anniversary is an act of commitment to the founding professors, to the Cenatox collective, and to the people of Matanzas. Strengthening the work of the specialty in the province is essential for the future of the health system.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The manuscript contains self-citations; however, an independent reviewer (with no conflict of interest) assessed the quality of these studies before including them in the document.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The authors declare that artificial intelligence was not used in the writing of the manuscript.