

# ***THE PORTUGUESE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION***



## *The Portuguese Medical Association*

- The Medical Association was legalized by decree law, on 24 November of 1938, having its chairman (known as *bastonário*) been Elysio de Moura (1877-1977).
- It should be noted that the Portuguese Medical Association was preceded by other regional institutions with similar purposes, but never legalized. Indeed, in 1898, The Portuguese Medical Association was founded in Lisbon. That first association was formed because, according to the text, a small group of doctors from Lisbon “known as trusted and stubborn” thought it would be useful to found an association to defend its members from the province and the capital of the abuses against the profession by various institutions.



Para primeiro bastonário da Ordem dos Médicos, após a fundação deste organismo, em 1938, foi designado o Professor **Elysio de Moura**.

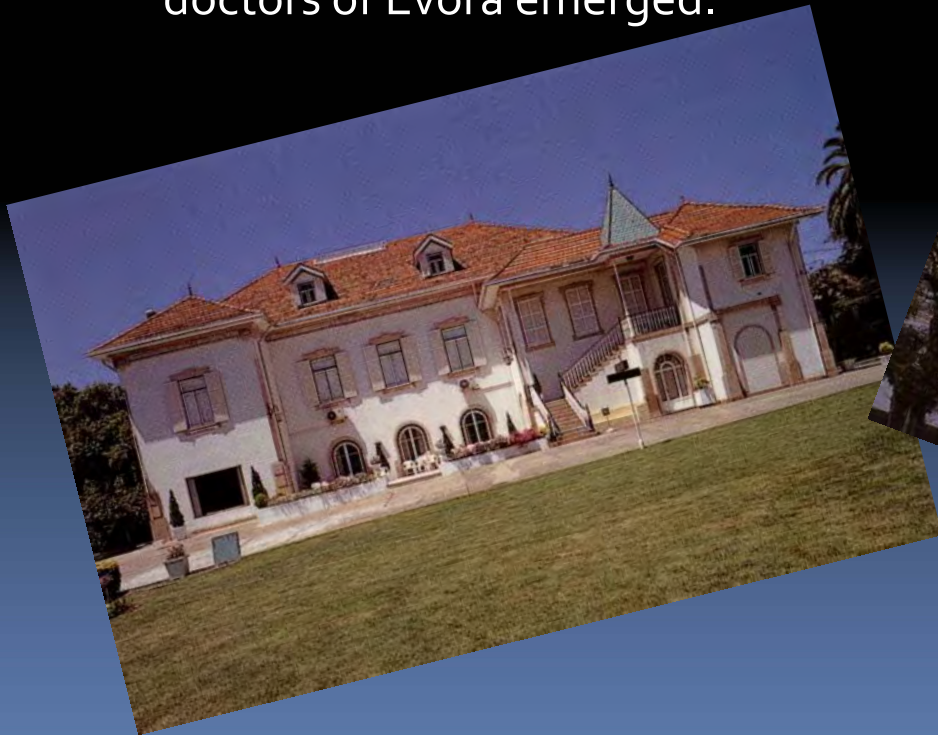
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- The text finalizes saying: “In its relations with the state, our sovereign, that gives us the bread of tax and other breads of similar flour ...” This association unanimously adopted, in October of 1899, its first Code of Ethics.
- On December 22 of 1909, the first meeting of the association class of doctors/physicians in Northern Portugal was held with the purpose of raising the prestige of the medical profession and to establish links of solidarity among its members. By charter of the Presidency of the Portuguese Republic of 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1913, signed by Manuel d'Arriaga, the statutes of The Portuguese Medical Association or Class Association of Physicians of Northern Portugal are approved

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- . Coimbra followed the example and the Medical Association of the Centre of Portugal was constituted. With similar activities, the Provincial Union of Doctors of Portalegre and the Association of Portuguese doctors of Évora emerged.



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- In the meantime, however, the idea of union or reunion of all doctors in one body, which at national level, brings together, defends and obliges by clear-cut rules defined by all, and accepted with a strong membership base within the spirit of ethics and deontology which doctors, in honour of the profession, had to take on and undertook to defend. In these early statutes of the Association, founded in 1938, in the chapter of the rights and duties, it has always been said that the practice of medicine, to those who were not registered as doctors in the Medical Association, was prohibited.



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- During the period of validity of the Estado Novo (New State), the Medical Association was characterized by the defence of ethical-deontological principles and was the guarantor of the technical exercise of medicine. With the assignment of new functions, alert by Decree-Law No. 38,213 of 26 March 1951, especially in what refers to the issuance of the title of specialist, points out the intervenient character of the Association in the Defence of health and of patients.



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- Once again, the status of the Medical Association was reviewed by the Decree-Law No. 40,651 of June 21, 1956, which recasts the entire structure, eight years after the original decree.
- Moreover, the Medical Association always made itself heard in the great problems of health policy, having agglutinated the class around a Health project and Medical Careers, according to a more humanized medicine and covering the whole population. Thus arose the famous report of the Medical Careers, which has influenced the organization of health policy since then. The Bastonário (chairman) at the time was Professor Miller Guerra, who joined around him a group of physicians that prevailed the youth at the time. If we read the editions, which the Medical association published, known as the Study on Medical Careers, 1959 and Report on Medical Careers, 1961 and reprinted in 1967, one is surprised how, after thirty years, the philosophy mentioned, the recommendations and criticism are still today almost entirely applicable.

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- The Association suffered the consequences of the changing times of 1974 when a group decided to transform it, without consulting the medical profession, a trade union to the taste of the time. In 1976, physicians gather and organize the Association. The class much owed the responsible and dedicated colleagues of that time, who drew up the current status of the Medical Association, which corresponds to the decree-law No. 282 of 5 July 1977 approved when Mário Soares was the prime minister.





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- In the life of the Medical Association, major events have been particularly linked to the fight for the principles that have the duty to defend: health, treatment of patients, operation of public or private institutions and medical careers. In this regard, a meeting of the Association which may be called "Ceremony", and which was a festival of "Consecration of Medicine," should be remembered. This meeting was held on December 4, 1954 in the Hall of Portugal Geographic Society, where the rulers of that time presided, and which teachers with academic dress and other individuals who had been invited also attended. The president, Cerqueira Gomes, offered a prayer of Wisdom and the same happened with two guests: the teachers Pedro Pasteur Vallery-Radot (1886-1970), grandson of the wise Pasteur, and Gregorio Marañon (1887-1960).

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- Pasteur Vallery-Radot speech is a typical moment of the French language, the culture of a man, but also an example of upholding the principles of a noble profession.
- Here are some ideas which he then exposed: "The medical ultrasound technology and standardized, as anonymous as inhumane, leads the States the tendency to turn doctors into public servants" (...) "But attention to the future! The most terrible mistake of the legislature will be the non respect for human personality by removing the patient's free choice of his/her doctor." He adds: "There are four fundamental principles, which he decided to appoint as ' charter hospital', which the state can not infringe without the danger of destroying Medicine. These principles are: free choice of doctor by the patient, respect for professional secrecy, the freedom to prescribe and direct negotiation between the patient and doctor." And Pasteur Vallery-Rodot ended by saying that " Medicine is morally, socially and even technically worth nothing unless it is through man, the doctor that exercises medicine".

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- Gregorio Marañón also made a wonderful speech that quoted the following passage: "All Laws around the world today socialize medicine with more or less means of fortune. None of these laws could extinguish the instinct of conservation of our profession which is neither a political party nor a current of opinion, both examples of ephemeral species, but a reality radically attached to life and as durable as life itself. The great advances in medicine are accompanied by an unsustainable financial burden. But the dehumanization is unacceptable. Medicine has to be made available to the public, the people."



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- In the life of The Portuguese Medical Association and throughout the medical class, years later, in the late 50's, they began to feel the winds of change, which Harold MacMillan had mentioned, British Prime Minister preparing his country and Europe to understand the independence of the countries of the Commonwealth. Looming in was the socialization of medicine and all the Portuguese doctors agreed, cooperated and lived the aforementioned Report of Medical Careers.
- From knowledge of what was happening abroad, especially in the European Community, the Association concluded that there was no difference compared to Portugal. In addition, therefore, Fernando Pessoa should remember that, in the *Livro do Desassossego* (Book of Disquiet) says: "I will always be from the *Douradores* (Gilders) Street, as all humanity."