



BARCELONA

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MANAGEMENT OF
HYPERTENSION AND ITS COMORBIDITIES**

**BARCELONA (SPAIN)
26TH – 28TH NOVEMBER 2015**



A BRIEF HISTORY OF BARCELONA AND ITS UNIVERSITY

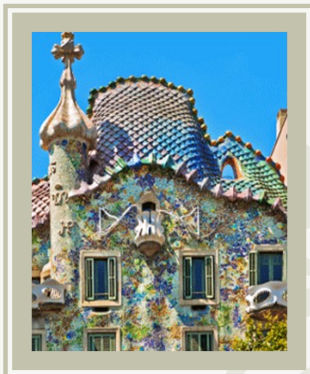
Fondazione Internazionale Menarini is proud to promote in Barcelona the International Symposium on *the Complexity of the Management of Hypertension and its Comorbidities* organized by the Catedra de Medicina Interna UB-SEMI-MENARINI School of Medicine at the University of Barcelona and under the auspice of the European Society of Hypertension.

The city of Barcelona is the second largest city of Spain in size and population and the sixth largest in European Union and lays in a privileged position on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It is the capital of the region of Cataluña, one of the seventeen Autonomous Communities of the country. It is a city well known for its quirky, cosmopolitan, energetic and cool character. More than other cities in Spain, Barcelona preserves strongly and proudly its own traditions, culture and Catalan language, which was banned from public institutions during Franco dictatorship. Today, Catalan and Castilian Spanish are the two official languages spoken in Barcelona.

The documented history of the city dates back to the founding of a Roman colony, in the second century B.C., on the site of a previous agricultural settlement. A legend says that the Carthaginian Hamilcar Barca, father of Hannibal, founded the city in the III century B.C. and named it Barcino after his family.

It was first ruled by the Visigoths, and subsequently came to form part of the Moorish Caliphate of Cordoba. After the Christian conquest in the late IX century, it became the seat of the counts of Barcelona and, subsequently, the capital of the Kingdom of Cataluña and Aragón. For centuries, it was the central port in an extensive Mediterranean trading empire.

Barcelona grew to be a typical dense medieval city, with narrow streets, locked inside defensive walls. In 1854, the walls were demolished and the expansion of the old city was undertaken in 1859. The city still preserves monuments of Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance periods or still before, but most characteristic is what was built during the last 100 years that saw spectacular urban, industrial and economic development, with the growth of the new industrial bourgeoisie,



who had a high purchasing power and increased cultural interests. Since the second half of the XIX century and thanks to the World Exposition of 1888, Barcelona became the centre of a very innovative art expression that deeply changed the city and still characterizes it: the Catalan Modernism. It was a novel cultural, political movement that spread out in Barcelona in all forms of artistic expressions, primary on architecture and also on applied and decorative arts, painting, sculpture, poetry, theatre “to escape Historicism, the tyranny of previous historical styles” and as expression of Cataluña’s culture and strive for independence from Spain.

The main forms were the architectural works of few genial and unconventional Catalan architects who became the symbols of the new movement: Antoni Gaudí, Lluís Domènech i Montaner and Josep Puig i Cadafalch. The style they used was unique, full of creativity, innovation, inventiveness. Their buildings were constructed with asymmetry forms, dynamic shapes, unusual roofs, intricate ironwork balconies, original domes and sloping sections at different heights; the interiors seemed to be lined in a range of materials such as iron, wood, ceramics and polychrome tiles.

Today the city has more than 2,000 buildings attributed to the Catalan Modernism or containing modernist elements and nine of them have been designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The most famous pieces are the Casa Batlló, the Milá-Pedrerera and Parc Güell, the Sagrada Família, the Palau de la Música Catalana, the Casa de les Punxes. Other Modernism artistic expressions came from the painters Santiago Rusiñol and Ramon Casas, the sculptors Eusebi Arnau and Josep Llimona, the cabinetmaker Gaspar Homar, the glassmaker Lluís Rigalt.





Since the end of Modernism period, the city has always proved its will to be innovative, non-conformist and to follow the latest international tendencies or be ahead of them. For example, during the two World Wars the city became home of the Surrealist movement of painters like Joan Mirò, the eccentric Salvador Dalí and Antoni Tàpies who were specialised in representing the unconscious mind, the “dream-like” images, discovering a new way of looking at the reality. In addition, Picasso appreciated the innovative creativity of Barcelona, where he spent part of his life and took inspiration.



During the last years, Barcelona has grown much faster than any other city in Spain becoming the engine of change, progress and industrialization of the country. Industry in the manufacture of paper, iron, wool, leather, textiles and processed fish, as well as in the export of wine and cotton has led the city to a new sense of confidence and prosperity.

Barcelona has always given an enormous importance to the education of its people and today the city hosts many higher institutions and colleges. Among them, there is the *Universitat de Barcelona*, called UB. It is the fifth oldest school in the world and it is known for its research programs and contributions to science.



It is a public institution located straight in the city centre, not far from Plaça de Catalunya, the conjunction between the old city and the nineteenth century Eixample district.

UB was founded on 3rd November 1450 by means of the Royal Prerogative of King Alfonso V of Aragon with the chairs in Theology, Canon Law, Civil Law, Moral and Natural Philosophy, the Seven Arts, Medicine and other disciplines.



However, the history of the *Universidad de Barcelona* started over 50 years before, in 1398, with a letter from King Martín that established here an *Estudi General*, the old name for a medieval university, which remained active until 1714. In the same year, it was closed down by the Bourbon dynasty, after the War of the Spanish Succession in which the Catalans fought for the Habsburg dynasty and a new University was established in Cervera, where all Studies of the country were moved. Despite the willingness to abolish existing services, medical studies continued in Barcelona and in 1760 new official high-level

courses were set up with the creation of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Only in 1837, during the liberal monarchic period, under the Queen Isabel II de Borbòn, the University of Barcelona was restored. On its return, the institution was housed in several existing buildings as the Convent of Carme, the Royal Academy of Medicine and the Hospital of Santa Creu and Sant Pau.

In 1863, Catalan architect Elies Rogent began a new building to host all faculties in a neo-gothic and pre-Renaissance construction. It became one of the first buildings to be raised outside the ancient city walls.

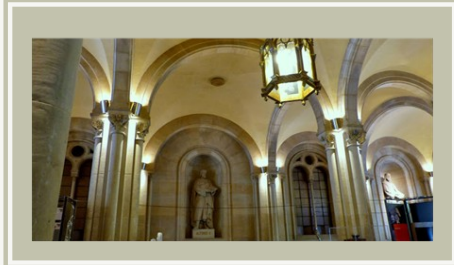
The Faculty of Medicine was not part of the new construction and continued at the former Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau, where it had been since 1843. The new Faculty of Medicine opened in 1906 at the new Hospital Clinic.

Nowadays, the University building is declared a national monument of historic and artistic interest and hosts the Rector's offices and the departments of Philology and Mathematics.





The imposing building shows on the façade the coat of arms of the Spanish crown during the reign of the Habsburgs with a fleur-de-lis added in the center, acknowledging the period when the University was restored to the city. On its side are two stone medallions bearing the bust of Alfonso the Magnanimous, the royal founder of the *Estudi General* and of Queen Elisabeth II de Borbòn during whose reign the University returned to Barcelona.



The main entrance hall is divided into three naves and eight sections with pillars that support groin vaults with capitals furnished with the coat of arms of the Spanish provinces. The walls are decorated with five life-sized statues of St. Isidoro of Seville, Averroes, Alfonso X the Wise, Ramon Llull y Joan Lluís Vives, representatives of the five culture that made up Spanish history.

A great staircase of honour leads upward where there are precious paintings of the collection of the Museo del Prado, tapestries decorated with the historical heraldic shields of the University and the Golden Toisón.

A series of portraits of the rectors, since the restoration of the institution in 1837, are hung on in the anteroom of the Aula Magna next to the Rectorate, the Library and the famous Paranymp Hall.



Besides the central headquarters of the University of Barcelona, hosting Mathematics and Philology degrees and masters, there is the Faculty of Medicine. It was not part of the new construction of Elies Rogent and initially it continued its activity at the former Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau. In 1879, the Senate of the Faculty of Medicine declared that a new building was needed with a teaching hospital annexed. In 1906, the Barcelona's Hospital Clínic was founded, thanks to the initiative of Doctor Valentí de Carulla, the rector of the city's University. The hospital was originally



intended to treat the needy and socially disadvantaged classes, with doctors and nuns working altruistically. During the Spanish Civil War, the hospital was the only emergency clinic in the city, treating the large numbers of people wounded in the bombings by Franco's Nationalist air force.

The designer was the Catalan architect Josep Domènech i Estapà (1858-1917) in 1904 who first constructed the building outside the Old city, following the new grid of the new Enlargement (Eixample). In those years, he also built in the city the Palace of Justice decorating the façade with 22 reliefs based on important events in the history of Catalonia.

The new Faculty of Medicine opened in 1906 with its teaching

hospital and degree in Medicine.

Nowadays, the city hosts several locations of the Faculty:

- the Medicine Campus at the Hospital Clínic Agustí Pi i Sunyer
- the Bellvitge Health Sciences Campus
- the Hospital Sant Joan de Déu
- Universities hospitals and other associated centres

The building presents an imposing front façade on Carrer Casanova, the main entrance that comprises a classical columned portico crowned by a pediment with allegorical reliefs. The monumental, severe and regular architecture is based on the classicist trend of the time but it presents modified motifs of Eclecticism and Modernisme that are more visible in the interior halls, in the main staircase, in the courtyard and in the Paranymp.





The Paranymph



Nice to know is that Paranymph is an ancient Greek word that originally meant “friend of the bridegroom, best man”. For a semantic transition, it has become only in Catalan “the person who makes the inaugural speech at the university course” and today it identifies “the assembly hall for university ceremonies”.

In this room, prestigious events, inaugurations of the academic year or the concession of the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa are celebrated. It one of the most emblematic places in the historical building.

This hall will be the venue of the open ceremony of our Symposium chaired by Professor Antonio Coca, President of the meeting and Head of the Hypertension and Vascular Risk Unit Hospital Clinic in Barcelona. The sessions of the meeting will continue in the CCIB Congress Centre of Barcelona with the participation of the most qualified experts from the sector.

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