

Research Article – History of Anatomy and Embryology

André Latarjet (1877-1947). Anatomist and surgeon specialized in sports medicine

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Abstract

André Latarjet (1877-1947), physician and surgeon, outstanding professor of anatomy, made important contributions to the study of human anatomy. He was the disciple and successor of Dr. Leo Testut and continued the diffusion of his work. He was a member of the French Academy of Medicine and President of the International Federation of Sports Medicine.

Key words

André Latarjet, human anatomy, anatomist, sports medicine, history of medicine.

Introduction

Dr. André Latarjet was a Medicine Doctor, physician and surgeon, an outstanding anatomist and professor of human anatomy, as well as a specialist in sports medicine. His works still constitute a basic important reference as text and consultation books for the study of human anatomy in many schools of medicine in the universities of Latin America and Europe.

This article deals with certain aspects of the scientific and professional life of André Latarjet, as well as his outstanding works on human anatomy, as part of a field of ongoing research on persons who have made significant contributions to the study and teaching of human anatomy and of medicine more in general.

Career and activity of André Latarjet

Biographical sketch

André Raphael Latarjet Gouy was born on August 20, 1877, in Dijon, France. His parents were Eugene Latarjet Félix, a civil engineer, and Malvina Gualberte Gouy. No data are known on his early childhood and adolescence.

He married Suzanne Françoise Linossier in Paris in January 1911, with whom he had two sons: Raymond Latarjet, who became medical doctor specialist in oncology and director of the Department of Biology of the Curie Institute, and Michel Latarjet, medical doctor and professor of human anatomy.

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Figure 1 – André Latarjet (1877-1947).

He participated in the First World War as chief trauma consultant, later using the experience obtained in battlefield on abdominal injuries and skull and spine fractures to update further editions of his works.

André Latarjet passed away on May 4, 1947 at the age of 69 in Lyon, France.

Studies, teaching and honours

André Latarjet studied at the Faculty of Medicine in Lyon. In 1901 he was designated resident doctor at Lyon Hospital and started working in the laboratory of the anatomist Professor Leo Testut, who advised him to abandon surgery practice and devote himself to studying and teaching human anatomy.

He worked as assistant anatomist from 1904 to 1907 at the Faculty of Medicine in Lyon, until when he became a professor and in 1908 was designated as head of the anatomical laboratory. He became professor of anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine of Lyon in 1919. As of 1923, André Latarjet participated in the teaching of sports medicine, and was the director of advanced courses in physical education at Lyon, France. A photograph of André Latarjet may be freely accessed at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9_Latarjet#/media/File:Latarjet.jpg.

Latarjet, together with Georges Demeny, created the Institute of Physical Education of Lyon in October 1920.

André Latarjet was designated a correspondent member of the French Academy of Medicine in 1921 (Académie Nationale de Médecine, 2014). He was elected President of the International Federation of Sports Medicine from 1933 to 1937 during

the second international congress in Torino, Italy, in 1933 (Fédération Internationale de Médecine du Sport - FIMS, 2014). He was elected honorary member of Mexico's Academy of Medicine in 1936 (Academia Nacional de Medicina de Mexico, 2014).

Scientific Research and Publications

For a André Latarjet conducted research on visceral innervation and on sympathetic innervation in general at the Claude Bernard Institute, studies which he continued throughout his entire life.

André Latarjet exhaustively investigated the anatomy of the pneumogastric (vagus) nerve. He applied his findings to systematic surgical denervation of the lesser and greater curvature of the stomach as well as the supra-pyloric region with the objective of respecting the trunk of the right branch of the vagus nerve, thus avoiding gastric paresis (Liang et al., 2005). He identified the branch of the pneumogastric (vagus) nerve which enters the pyloric antrum, giving rise to the eponym "nerve of Latarjet". He performed the first therapeutic vagotomy for the treatment of an active peptic ulcer in 1923, thus giving his name to this surgical technique (Rodka, 2003). He studied the influence of acetylcholine in the gastric secretion of hydrochloric acid and pointed out the deleterious effects of vagotomy on gastric emptying. Based on these advances, better results were obtained in the surgery of peptic ulcer as this technique was improved to avoid gastroparesis and enhance gastric motility.

The eponym "Latarjet's vascular lunettes" is also given to the space where the two sheets of the mesentery come in contact with each other between each pair of rectal vessels, the intestinal border and the arcade from which those vessels originate (Rodríguez Rivero, 1953).

Latarjet made important contributions in the study of human anatomy and published several papers, including the following: A Study on Pharyngectomies, in 1906; Arterial vascularization of the Thymus, in 1911; Gastric Innervation and Denervation, Anatomic, Experimental and Clinical Trials, in 1922; Atlas on Practical Anatomy Work, in 1923; A Practical Case of Anatomy-Osteology, in 1926; Surgical Anatomy of the Cranium and Brain, in 1938; Treatise on Human anatomy, 3 Volumes; Meninges and the Peripheral Nervous System, The Organs of the Senses, Respiration and Phonation, Internal Secretion Glands and the Manual of Anatomy Applied to Physical Education and Physiotherapy, for interns applying for a position as professor and the physical education and orientation of students in massage schools; the date of publication of these last books is unknown (Romero, 2013). Together with Leo Testut he published the Testut-Latarjet Compendium of Descriptive Anatomy in 1921. In 1925, Latarjet wrote an article in memoriam of his mentor and benefactor, Dr. Léo Testut (1849-1925) in the Journal of the Society of History and Archeology of Perigord.

Throughout his career he dedicated to enriching and expanding the treatise on human anatomy started by Professor Testut, which as of 1925 was renamed the Testut-Latarjet Treatise of Human Anatomy (Fernandes and Babinski, 2012) and is considered one of the most thorough treatises of human anatomy with 4144 detailed illustrations, most of which are in color, drawn by G. Devy and S. Duprey. This Treatise has been translated from French into Spanish, Italian, German and other languages (Testut and Latarjet, 1978). The eighth edition was commenced the year of Testut's death in 1925 and incorporated André Latarjet as an author, he was then in charge of

later editions of the textbook. This treatise on human anatomy is characterized by the precise descriptions of the human body and is enriched by anthropological and philosophical concepts. It is still valid after more than one century since its initial publication in 1887 and continues to be used as a textbook or consultation book in many Faculties of Medicine all over Latin America and Europe (Romero, 2011).

André Latarjet was also an avid voyager. He travelled all over Latin America and made an expedition to the polar regions of Lapland with his brother, the explorer Raymond Latarjet. In 1931, André Latarjet and Louis Tavernier (of the Faculty of Medicine of Lyon) and Paul Durand (sub-director of the Pasteur Institute in Tunisia) were hired to travel to Colombia at the request of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, to analyze the structure of the Faculty of Medicine and propose a general amendment to the regulations. They propose three types of training: theoretical, combined (courses and laboratory work linked to the theory) and clinical training in hospitals. They also proposed a detailed study plan (Nieto 2005).

Legacy

André Latarjet's legacy has extended beyond his works through the work carried out by his son, Michel Latarjet (1913-1999), a medical doctor and surgeon who was also a professor of anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine of Lyon. He authored in 1978 the last edition of the Testut-Latarjet's Treatise on Human Anatomy and co-authored with Dr. Alfredo Ruiz-Liard a two-volume treatise on human anatomy (Latarjet and Ruiz-Liard, 1983).

In 1992 the Museum of Anatomy of Lyon was distinguished with the joint name Testut-Latarjet (<http://museetl.univ-lyon1.fr/index.html>) so as to highlight these great French anatomy cathedratics between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. One square in Lyon and a boulevard in Villeurbanne, France, were named after André Latarjet, in his honour.

André Latarjet is considered one of the most outstanding anatomists of his time and his work continues to be a significant contribution in the field of teaching and learning of human anatomy.

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