

ARTICLE · CULTURA & SAÚDE

The Egometric Test

A witty acceptance speech on the "ego's resistance to massage"

Irany Novah Moraes

Received for publication in June 2006 · Section: Article · Language: English

ABSTRACT

The text reproduces the author's acceptance speech upon being honored by the Brazilian Society of Internal Medicine among the "Great Names of Medicine," at a solemn session held in June 2006 during the opening of an international congress with six thousand participants. In a witty tone, he lists four reasons that lead him to break his habit of silence: the prestige of the society, the grandeur of the occasion, the company of distinguished colleagues, among them his former professor Bussamara Neme, and the nomination itself. Moved, he jokes that the "massage to the ego" struck him squarely and playfully suggests creating an "Egometric Test" to study how the ego's resistance to praise varies with age, distinguishing it from cardiological exercise stress testing. He closes by expressing profound gratitude.

KEYWORDS: *tribute; speech; medical humor; ego; internal medicine; gratitude*

I t studies the variation, with age, of the ego's resistance to massage.

The Brazilian Society of Internal Medicine (Sociedade Brasileira de Clínica Médica), in a solemn session to **Hon-
or the Great Names of Medicine**, held on June 15, 2006, conferred this distinction upon me. Although I have always strictly followed the wise maxim, *speaking only if your message is stronger than silence*, in view of the circumstances surrounding this moment I feel obliged to break that precept.

Four are the reasons that lead me to do so. The *first* is the great prestige of the society bestowing this tribute. The *second* is the chosen occasion: the grandeur of the opening ceremony of an International Congress with six thousand participants. The *third* justification is being in the company of a constellation of first-rank colleagues, among whom I invoke the name of Prof. Bussamara Neme—perhaps the dean of this group, and my professor at the USP School of Medicine—to celebrate alongside the other honorees. The *fourth* reason is being named one of the Great Names of Medicine. At that point the ego was struck squarely. It was devastating!

I did not know that a massage to the ego could stir such powerful emotion, but Professors Antonio Carlos Lopes and Alexandre Gabriel Jr. did know—for they scheduled this tribute at a time when internists and cardiologists of the highest caliber would be present to attend to any emergency!

This whole preamble is meant to make plain how deeply moved I am, and thus to express my profound gratitude.

In view of this experience I am living, and by way of acknowledgment, I suggest to Dr. Alexandre that he propose to one of his graduate students the study of a new examination to investigate how, with age, the ego's resistance to massage varies, and to indicate the safe range at the various levels of longevity. It could be called the **Egometric Test**, having nothing to do with the exercise stress test (ergometry) that you gentlemen have fully mastered and in which we surgeons are less versed.

Since I am already entering the risk range, it is prudent to stop. Here I remain!

My deepest thanks.

Irany Novah Moraes