

## OBITUARY

Jose Guerrero Tolentino, M.D.  
1900–1983



Dr. Jose Guerrero Tolentino, one of the few internationally known Filipino leprologists, died on April 30, 1983, at the age of 83. He was born in Masingal, Ilocos Sur, Philippines, on March 16, 1900.

He took his medical course at the University of the Philippines and graduated in 1926. Shortly after graduation, he joined the government service and served as a resident physician at the Southern Islands Hospital, Cebu City, for three years. He joined leprosy work thereafter, by being appointed as a Senior Physician of the Culion Leper Colony where he served for two years. He was transferred to Eversley Childs Sanitarium where he served as Resident Physician for eight years. He was promoted later to become Chief, Eversley Childs Sanitarium and, concurrently, Physician-in-Charge of the Cebu Skin Clinic, a position he held for 12 years until he retired from government service in 1949. Before he was appointed as Research Leprologist of the Leonard Wood Memorial in 1951, he was an Assistant Director of the Cebu Velez General Hospital. In 1963, he became Chief of the Clinical Research Branch of the Leonard Wood Memorial, a position he held up to the time of his retirement in 1971.

Dr. Tolentino had conducted a series of clinical evaluation studies on the efficacy of new drugs in the treatment of lepromatous leprosy at the Leonard Wood Memorial under the direction of Drs. Doull and Binford. He also collaborated with others in various research projects conducted at the Leonard Wood Memorial which have helped considerably in the better understanding of the clinical aspect and treatment of leprosy.

He was credited with 17 publications and co-authored 20 papers on leprosy. He attended the International Congresses of Lep-

rosy, Tokyo (1958), Rio de Janeiro (1963), London (1968), as well as the WHO Inter-Regional Postgraduate Training Course, Eastern Pacific Region, Manila, in 1961 as lecturer and the WHO First Regional Seminar on Leprosy Control, Manila, in 1965 as a consultant, and many other international conferences where he read papers dealing with the clinical aspects and therapy of leprosy. He was included in the roster of the "Senior Distinguished Contributors in the Centennial Festschrift" of the International Leprosy Association. Aside from his lifelong interest in leprosy, he was active in medical education and co-founded the Cebu Institute of Medicine and the Cebu Velez College of Nursing where he served until 1980 as one of the members of the Board of Trustees. He also served as President of the Cebu Medical Society in 1963.

Dr. Tolentino was a humble, conscientious, unassuming gentleman who enjoyed the esteem and affection of his patients and colleagues alike. He was loved and respected by everyone who knew him. He was very much a family man and medicine seemed to be the dominant force in the family. He is survived by his wife, Consolacion, a nurse whom he met when he was a resident at Southern Islands Hospital, and his five children: Ernesto, a proctologist; Carmen, a pharmacist married to an EENT specialist; Lucia, an internist married to a psychiatrist; Leticia, a nurse married to an internist; and Mariano, an internist and Consultant in Medicine, Leonard Wood Memorial, married to an OB-GYN specialist.

—Rodolfo M. Abalos

DR. GERALD P. WALSH, as Assistant Laboratory Director of the Leonard Wood Memorial-Eversley Childs Sanitarium Leprosy Research Laboratory from 1967 to 1968, and Laboratory Director 1970–1972, writes:

I first met Dr. Tolentino in 1967 when he was Chief of the Clinical Research

Branch of the Leonard Wood Memorial Leprosy Research Foundation in Cebu, Philippines. I was assigned to the laboratory which provided support services for the clinical studies evaluating various regimes of dapsone, B663, and rifampin in untreated lepromatous patients. Periodically, Dr. Tolentino would convene the professional staff to review the patients on the different regimes, pointing out the salient features of the disease and the patient's response to therapy. He was a methodical teacher and his thorough explanations and careful attention to detail made these sessions informative for all who worked with him. We all admired Dr. Tolentino's clinical expertise demonstrated in these sessions, but one quality that was outstanding was the warmth and concern shown by Dr. Tolentino for his patients. In addition to treating their physical problems, he also tried to ease the psychological and social stresses so common among leprosy patients. Dr. Tolentino often asked his patients about their families and would try to arrange transportation for families to visit patients if that was needed. He would also ask about any problems patients had with others at the hospital and would attempt to alleviate tensions. It was common to see a patient leaving Dr. Tolentino's with a look of relief and often a smile thanks to the understanding of this physician who dedicated his entire professional career to the care and treatment of leprosy patients. His dedication and concern for his patients earned him a special place in their hearts. He will be long remembered for his kindness and compassion.

This kindness was also evident in his personal life. He was devoted to his wife and family, and was deeply loved and respected by his children. My wife and I spent numerous evenings with Dr. and Mrs. Tolentino, who frequently entertained scientists and other individuals visiting the Leonard Wood facilities. They were a gracious family and made every effort to see that visitors felt welcome.

He was a quiet and humble man who will be long remembered by those who knew him.

CHAPMAN H. BINFORD, M.D., who,

as Medical Director of the Leonard Wood Memorial, collaborated with Dr. Tolentino from 1963 until 1971, adds the following:

The death of Dr. Tolentino ended an important period in leprology that began in 1922 when Major General Leonard Wood, Governor General of the Philippines, persuaded Dr. H. Windsor Wade, Head of Pathology and Bacteriology at the University of the Philippines, to bring the scientific medicines of that time to the 7000 neglected patients with leprosy isolated at the Culion Sanitarium. Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez joined General Wood that year, and in 1930 Dr. Tolentino joined Wade and Rodriguez at Culion as a senior physician. In 1933 Dr. Ricardo Guinto began with Dr. J. A. Doull an epidemiologic study of leprosy in the Municipality of Cordova, on Mactan Island, Cebu. These four physicians, one an adopted Filipino and the others native born, who together devoted more than 200 years to upgrading the practice of leprology, continuously seeking new approaches to the scientific investigation of the disease, brought high honor and international recognition to the Philippines.

In 1951 Dr. J. A. Doull, Medical Director of the Leonard Wood Memorial (LWM), obtained funds from the United States Public Health Service and other sources to undertake an international project to evaluate the efficacy in leprosy of the recently introduced sulfone, dapsone (DDS), which had not been subjected to a scientifically controlled drug trial. Doull had the foresight to recognize in Dr. Tolentino the personal and professional qualities needed for a day-to-day clinical chief of an experimental chemotherapy program and therefore appointed him Research Leprologist of the LWM. Dr. Tolentino was invited to join the Working Clinical Conference on the evaluation of drugs used for the treatment of leprosy, a meeting that the LWM and the Japanese Ministry of Health were convening in Japan in September 1952. This conference brought together leprologists and other scientists from Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, and the United States who had agreed to collaborate in the international study which would in-

clude nearly 1000 lepromatous leprosy patients in Japan, South Africa, and the Philippines.

After preliminary meetings in Tokyo, the Working Clinical Conference convened in two leprosaria on the Inland Sea, Aisen-en (Director, Dr. K. Mitsuda) and Komyo-en (Director, Dr. R. Jinju). For ten days the conferees, following Dr. Doull's meticulously prepared agenda, enthusiastically discussed the many procedures required for operating successfully an international study designed to evaluate several antileprotic drugs. The study was to be conducted in three countries, using identical methods and valid controls. This conference provided Dr. Tolentino with background training in the methodology and monitoring of clinical projects in experimental chemotherapy.

Dr. Tolentino was a precise clinical observer who accurately recorded his observations. Patients trusted him implicitly. Each patient was approached professionally in a friendly manner. His sincere sympathetic concern for his patients was reflected in the manner in which the nurses and attendants in his clinic treated the patients.

Patients participating in the clinical evaluation studies of the LWM joined the studies voluntarily and could freely withdraw from the trials. During the years when I was the Medical Director of the LWM, I do not recall that at any time was there ever a problem caused by patients leaving the studies.

Dr. Tolentino's scientific publications were clear and succinct. He was, therefore, an invaluable participant in the laborious organization of the data and preparation of the manuscripts for publication. During the two decades following the Working Clinical Conference in Japan in 1952, six comprehensive evaluation series were published in the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY* by Dr. Doull and his co-workers. Dr. Tolentino played an essential role in all of these.

In addition to the evaluation series, Dr. Tolentino contributed to many other studies. Noteworthy among these, he assisted Dr. C. C. Shepard in the clinical trials that established the efficacy of DADDS, a repository sulfone (now named acedapsone) that is administered by intramuscular injection every 77 days (*Am. J. Trop. Med. Hyg.* **17**:192-201, 1968).

A major contribution by Dr. Tolentino, with the collaboration of Dr. J. N. Rodriguez and Dr. R. M. Abalos, was a long-term (four years) evaluation of Lamprene<sup>®</sup> (clofazamine) compared with dapsone (*IJL* **39**:738-741, 1971). This study showed that Lamprene<sup>®</sup> could be given safely and that its efficacy against leprosy was comparable to dapsone. The significance of this long-term study is obvious because it showed that Lamprene<sup>®</sup> is an effective drug that can be safely used in dapsone-resistant patients, for at least four years.

Dr. Jose G. Tolentino, in 41 years dedicated to the practice and science of leprology, amply earned the right to be placed along with Wade, Rodriguez, and Guinto among the renowned leprologists of the Philippines and of the world.

During the years of my association with the staff of the Philippine Division of the LWM, I made many trips to Cebu. Among many pleasant memories of those trips are informal evening visits with Dr. and Mrs. Tolentino who lived only a block from my hotel. The conversation frequently turned to past events in their lives and their experiences in caring for patients with leprosy during the war years. Frequently when consultants and other scientists visited the Philippine Division of the LWM in Cebu, Dr. and Mrs. Tolentino invited them to their gracious home where they were served a "long to be remembered" Philippine dinner and experienced true Philippine hospitality.