

**OBITUARY****Dr Jorge Antonio Aldrete (1937-2025)****Carlos R. Degrandi Oliveira, MD, TSA/SBA, MSc****Author affiliation:**

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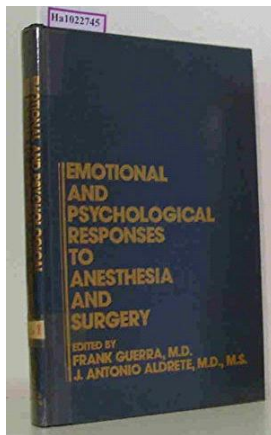
**Dr Jorge Antonio Aldrete** was the creator of the famous scale that doctors and nurses use in all hospitals to assess the condition of patients after anesthesia. He was born in Mexico City in 1937 and graduated from the National University of Mexico School of Medicine in 1960. He completed a surgical training internship but felt drawn to Anesthesiology. Dr Aldrete began his training in anesthesia in 1963 at Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, under the supervision of Dr Robert Hingson. In 1965, he moved to Denver to start a fellowship in anesthesia at the University of Colorado School of Medicine under the guidance of Dr Robert W. Virtue.

Dr Aldrete joined Dr Thomas Starzl's pioneering liver transplant team in 1963. He created the first anesthesia protocol for liver transplant patients and administered anesthesia for the first 180 human liver transplant procedures. "Few anesthesiologists had the skills or determination to handle these difficult cases," Dr Starzl said. "Tony could bring a stone back to life." He earned a master's degree in pharmacology, became chief of anesthesia at Denver Hospital, and in 1967 was promoted to associate professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. It was in Denver that he conceived the idea of creating a scale to assess the physical status of patients recovering from anesthesia and to track their emergence. Dr Aldrete saw the need for standardized nursing surveillance and recovery records. This prompted the development of a postanesthesia recovery score, which established discharge criteria for patients who had undergone anesthesia. Initially, the criteria were related to the patient's activity, respiration, circulation, consciousness and skin colour, assessed upon arrival and every hour in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU).

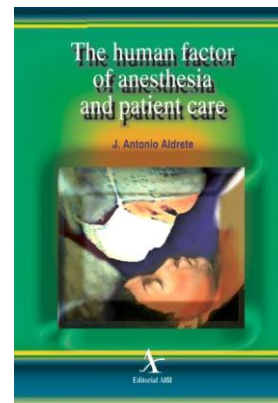
Dr Diane Kroulik co-authored a manuscript for Anesthesia and Analgesia, which was accepted for publication in 1970.<sup>1</sup> The scale was presented at the International Anesthesia Research Society congress and the official commentator was Dr Robert Hingson himself, who predicted the practical future of the scale, which was recommended by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Hospitals in 1980,<sup>2</sup> and revised by its author years later. With the advent and

dissemination of pulse oximetry, the analysis of arterial hemoglobin saturation replaced the subjective criterion of skin colour analysis. The Aldrete-Kroulik scale, or simply the Aldrete scale, has stood the test of time and has served as the basis for discharging patients from the PACU to the hospital ward or their homes after outpatient surgery. Dr Aldrete contributed to many areas of anesthesia and was the first physician to consider patients' emotional responses during surgery, his studies led to the publication of a book, "*Emotional Responses and Psychological colour analysis*."<sup>2</sup>

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"People entrust us with what is most precious: their lives and their minds," Dr Aldrete wrote in the foreword to his latest book. "I believe we have been able to create interest, raise awareness, and in some cases change the attitudes of many physicians about the need to address the emotions, fears, and prejudices that our patients have when facing a life-threatening event."



Dr Aldrete has held prominent positions as Chief of Anesthesia at the University of Colorado, Cook County Hospital in Chicago, and as a professor in the department of anesthesia in Tampa, Florida. In 1985, the professor was one of the leaders of the medical group that supported the

Mexican Red Cross during the earthquake that shook Mexico City, a story that was repeated in the following year's earthquake in the Republic of El Salvador.<sup>3</sup>

In 1989, he opened the first pain management clinic in northwest Florida. In addition to his full-time practice, Dr. Aldrete continued to publish and lecture on five continents.

In addition to having published dozens of articles in journals and books on topics as varied as malignant hyperthermia, low-flow and closed systems of anesthesia, psychological aspects and anesthesia, costs and theories of anesthesia and pain, he created the Foundation for the Study of Arachnoiditis. The University of Alabama at Birmingham created the Aldrete Award, presented to distinguished anesthesiologists during its annual meeting.<sup>3</sup>

A tireless author, inventor and teacher, Dr Aldrete inspired generations of anesthesiologists around the world, especially in Latin America. May his example of excellence and commitment be remembered and inspired forever.

## References

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3. Whizar-Lugo VM. El Profesor y Amigo; Don Antonio Aldrete-Salceda. *Anestesia en México* 2008;20(3):110-1.

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