

The International Frank Pais Orthopaedic Scientific Complex, in western Havana, is one of the most prestigious of its kind in the world for the innovative techniques used in treatments and the excellent results obtained through surgery and rehabilitation of many patients.



Restorers of Movement

By Mercy Ramos / Photos by José Tito Meriño



When you see a dancer dancing, an acrobat leaping, an athlete running or simply a person walking, you seldom stop to think that behind those movements may be the hand of an orthopaedic surgeon or a rehabilitation specialist responsible for restoring the health of a person after an injury or accident.

That is precisely the work performed by specialists at the Frank Pais Orthopaedic Science Complex, headed by its general director, Professor Dr. Rodrigo Álvarez Cambras, who has been at the helm of the institution for more than four decades.

"I started as director of this hospital on January 6, 1969, and since then the centre has gradually developed to become a scientific complex that, besides caring for patients in orthopaedics and rehabilitation, also trains professionals in those specialties", said Álvarez Cambras.

The physician went on to explain that this hospital has reached such a professional level that today it is an institution of national and international credential.



The Cuban scientist described the numerous possibilities for patients coming to Frank Pais, which treats every type of orthopaedic disease and trauma. For this, the centre has 750 beds and 28 operating rooms divided into three surgical units according to the severity of the condition.

“Foreign patients who wish to be treated only need to email a summary of their medical records and relevant documents to enable us to evaluate so we may reply with the corresponding steps to be taken,” said the director.

“Our institution has three hotels, two of which are of four-star category and prepared with required services

customized for foreign patients. The third hotel, with capacity for 100 people, is for specialists training in orthopaedics and rehabilitation, as well as for medical technicians in those specialties,” Cambras said.

Within the 11 hectares of the complex, continued Prof. Cambras, there is an exercise rehabilitation area, as well as a sauna and grounds for practicing sports like basketball, golf and tennis, among others. There is also a factory for orthopaedic prosthesis and surgical instruments, as well as a tissue bank available for grafts.

Each year more than 60,000 Cubans are seen for



consultation and 5,000 for operations, while some 540 foreign patients receive both types of hospital attention, as needed.

It is perhaps important to mention that all Cuban athletes are treated at this centre, many of whom have undergone surgery due to injuries. That was the case for two-time 400m and 800m Olympic title holder Alberto Juantorena, World Champion High Jumper Javier Sotomayor and, more recently, the Cuban 110 metre hurdles champion, Dayron Robles.

Dancers from the Cuban National Ballet are also treated, as are artists from the national circus and, it should be noted, 11 heads of state have been treated in this institution.

Cambras concluded with the observation that these achievements demonstrate that, despite the limitations due to the country's economic situation, our treatment technique has remained at the height of any nation in the world, with the excellent results we get in the attention to each patient.

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