

Neurology-related documents in the General Archive at Complutense University of Madrid

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to promote the resources on neurological training and studies kept in the General Archive at Complutense University of Madrid (AGUCM), especially for use by researchers interested in the history of neurology. To this end, the study contains two sections. First, it presents an overview of the medicine-related documents that are kept in the AGUCM; this serves to provide a wider context that may be useful for other studies that may examine the matter more minutely, while also informing readers of why the documents are kept here and not elsewhere, and why other papers they may have hoped to find remain at large. Second, it describes neurology-related documents located in the AGUCM's collection.

KEYWORDS

Archivo General de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, research, history of neurology

This study presents AGUCM, the General Archive of the Complutense University of Madrid, as a potential resource for use in researching the history of neurology. After presenting overarching themes, it will focus on more specific topics. The first section provides an overview of the medical documents kept by AGUCM and also mentions specific items held by other institutions. This will help the reader understand the context in which the documents were created, as well as how they have been preserved to the present day. Following this, we will examine documents more specifically related to our theme and identify the various document series providing the most examples of medical documents. Lastly, we will cite a few specific works as examples of what researchers may be able to find through an in-depth investigation. It should be stressed that the contexts in which a document was produced and archived are just as important as the physical document and its content, since an isolated item is at considerable risk for being misinterpreted.

Naturally, the documents kept by AGUCM constitute the material on which this study is based. I should also point out that all of the information about these documents is available on the AGUCM website (www.ucm.es/archivo), where researchers will also find

access to scanned copies of certain documents. This database includes all information we currently possess on these items, including data that has not yet been verified or revised. We believe in striving for transparency and in sharing all available information with all users, since providing unverified information is preferable to withholding material that researchers may find extremely useful.

1. Medical documents pertaining to the Complutense University of Madrid

As many already know, the earliest ancestor of the Complutense University was the *Studium Generale* created by King Sancho IV of Castile in 1293 in the town of Alcalá de Henares. There are very few records of the activities that took place in the *Studium Generale*, but in 1499, Cardinal Cisneros obtained a papal bull from Alexander IV that authorised developing the programme into a full-fledged university. As a result, this date is generally given as the true inception of the University of Alcalá. In any case, and despite the fact that classes did not effectively begin until 1508, the new university had its own medical school from the very beginning, with four professors of medicine and two surgery professors. Beginning in the 18th century,

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medical pedagogy at the university, which was highly scholastic and theoretical, began to give way to more practical teachings presented by different administrative bodies, especially Protomedicato, an early doctors' society based in Madrid. In 1780, Madrid also saw the founding of the Royal College of Surgery of San Carlos, which had the necessary credentials to award licenses to practice medicine. Under a host of different names ('Royal College of Medicine and Surgery of San Carlos' is the most well-known), the institution remained active until 1843.¹ Meanwhile, after a first and failed attempt between 1821 and 1824, the University of Alcalá was permanently relocated to Madrid in 1836. It would be known as the Literary University of Madrid until 1850 when it was renamed the Central University. One by one, its programmes of study were moved to Madrid, although it would seem that the Faculty of Medicine had not held any classes since 1800 due to a lack of students. In any case, the former Faculty of Medicine merged with the departments of medicine and pharmacy in 1843 to form the new Faculty of Medical Sciences. Two years later, the pharmacy department became independent once more, resulting in the Faculty of Medicine which remains active today.²

As might be expected, each of these institutions generated documents which had to be preserved. The AGUCM, however, only holds documents from the College of Surgery of San Carlos, and the collection is incomplete, as will be explained shortly.

As stated, the Faculty of Medicine became a department within the Central University, which in turn was renamed University of Madrid in 1943. During this prolonged period, nearly all of the university's administrative business was handled by the General Registrar. We do have some evidence that between 1853 and 1917, the Registrar was responsible for both an archive and a department dedicated to the Faculty of Medicine's administrative processes. This means that most of the paperwork having to do with the Faculty of Medicine was handled by the Office of the Registrar, and not the Faculty itself. In theory, these documents were stored in the archive. We cannot be sure whether the documents from the old University of Alcalá and from the College of San Carlos were also placed in this archive, but this is a likely possibility.

In any case, the Central University began to send its oldest documents to Spain's National Historical Archive in 1896.³ We do not know what exactly was

sent on that occasion, but the university transferred more documents in 1926, 1956, and 1981 as well. All of these files, except those sent in 1956, included documents pertaining to the Faculty of Medicine or the College of San Carlos.⁴ The National Historical Archive received some 6000 boxes and sheaves of documents pre-dating 1900 and generated by one of those two institutions. These boxes account for all the items from the Faculty of Medicine and a large percentage of those generated by the College of San Carlos, selected according to variable criteria. As a result, researchers interested in these documents will need to consult their descriptions, listed online at <http://pares.mcu.es>.

At the same time, the Faculty of Medicine continued generating and preserving documents, although we have no information regarding the criteria they considered for archiving items. The University of Madrid, which did not adopt the name Complutense University of Madrid until 1970, formally constituted another archive in the 1960s. This archive, in its various evolving forms, was first organised by the library before being absorbed by the Office of the Registrar.⁵ The Faculty of Medicine continued transferring additional documents to that location. Between 1971 and 1991, the exam records dating between the 19th century and 1989 were moved to the archive. A transfer in 1980 included, in addition to exam records, students' administrative documents from the 19th and early 20th centuries (tuition receipts, exams, transcripts, class registration documents, etc.). I should point out that most of the items preserved by the AGUCM were moved without there being any records of when or why this was occurring; all we know is that the material was transferred before 2001.

At present, the AGUCM preserves a total of 1150 boxes of documents from the Faculty of Medicine that are dated between 1825 and 1989. Most of these papers are student records: exam results, registration documents, and most of all, academic transcripts. The rest includes budgetary documents (for example, accounts receivable receipts from student fees, payment orders for material purchased by the Faculty); professors' personnel files; and a small but very interesting selection consisting of items referring to the general governance of the Faculty, such as deans' correspondence dating back to 1843 or minutes from Faculty Board meetings between 1910 and 1926.

Nevertheless, the Faculty of Medicine still uses its own facilities and means to archive a sizeable array of items

that are kept in unsuitable storage conditions. Their cataloguing methods are unknown, but they do grant access to some petitioners. We do know that the Faculty of Medicine still houses a total of 7500 boxes of documents, most of which are student records. It should be stated at this point that this collection includes only those documents under the authority of the general administration of the Faculty of Medicine, essentially the Administration Office and the Office of the Dean. It does not include items from departments within the Faculty. Complutense University of Madrid does not have a specific neurology department. As a result, those looking for records of neurology classes and research should examine what are presumably the most closely-related departments: Anatomical Pathology and Psychiatry. The former department was created in 1965, and the latter in 1968, although chairs for these specific subjects had existed since 1943.

However, as one might imagine, documents having to do with the study of medicine were not generated by the Faculty alone. I have already mentioned that during the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the Office of the Registrar contained an administrative unit that handled bureaucratic matters for the Faculty. In later years, the university's organisational structure evolved in such a way that each unit (meaning each office generating documents) would manage specific aspects of university business regardless of the student or professor's department or area of study. These units were responsible for administrative or teaching personnel, financial management, student affairs, research operations, and so on. The Registrar held authority over this entire structure until 1970, when the figure of the Chief Operating Officer appeared. While this position was originally entrusted with personnel and budget management, its competencies have expanded considerably since that time. While this article does not aim to provide an institutional history of university administration, I hope that this summary serves to clarify that relevant documents accumulated not only in the Faculty of Medicine, but also in different centralised branches and divisions of the university. For example, the Faculty keeps a set of personnel files on its professors, but at the same time, personnel files for all professors in the university are still generated by central personnel services. At the appropriate time, these offices will transfer their files to the AGUCM. This also occurs with documents having to do with research, financial management, or academic protocols. Nevertheless, we should also be aware that

these items, generally speaking, were produced by administrative processes. As a result, they either do not contain, or merely allude to, information of a more strictly scientific or academic nature.

2. Documentation on neurology in the university's General Archive

As we are well aware, neurology did not appear as an independent subject in Spanish medical programmes until 1967,⁶ so it is not surprising that we would find so few references to this field of study before that date. A search of the AGUCM database⁷ effectively confirms this near lack of items, but the few documents returned by the search are extremely interesting. One such example is the petition by the Neurological Sciences Foundation to the university's Board of Directors in 1961 to build a head office for their Institute on campus (AGUCM catalogue no. 54/11-43). Construction of this building, located just at the edge of the campus, was completed in 1965.⁸ We also find press clippings that refer to *Neurovegetativo*, the book written by Estanislao Lluesma and published in 1948. The clippings were discovered among the private papers of this Spanish doctor who had gone into exile in Argentina; his family donated the collection to the university in 2009 (AGUCM catalogue no. 157/09-1, 10). Examples that are even more interesting, although isolated in time, are the "Presentations regarding specialised teaching of dermatology and neuropathy courses" (AGUCM catalogue no. SG-2431, 1), dated 1892 and 1893. The file documents the inauguration of these courses, which were offered as electives alongside the core medical classes. A class titled "Neuropathy and mental illnesses" began to be presented in the 1893-1894 academic year under Professor Jaime Vera López. It included two theoretical classes a week, which were taught at the Faculty, and one hands-on class held daily at Hospital Provincial (Figure 1). Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to locate more information about what became of these classes in later years. Since other elective classes, such as dermatology and ophthalmology, did leave behind a constant paper trail –payments for material, receipts from student registration, and personnel files from the Chairs of those subjects– we believe that the neuropathy class did not get a foothold in the curriculum at that time.


In 1967, however, the University of Madrid formally recognised neurology as an academic discipline.

Because of this, we can locate traces of the department's normal activities in the form of student exam records and personnel files for the professors who taught this subject. A more difficult task would be to sift through the documents referring to class planning and scheduling in the Faculty of Medicine. The AGUCM holds a total of 92 file boxes containing this type of material, including files for the approval process of elective credits and experimental classes, and paperwork for the creation of different programmes of study. In general, these files have to do with the relationship between departments, the Office of the Dean, and the Chancellor's office. Two exceptional series of documents may prove useful. First, we have the files documenting the approval process for doctoral programmes, including a total of 32 boxes generated by the Faculty of Medicine between 1987 and 2005. These doctorates include an interdepart-

mental neurosciences programme, offered between 1998 and 2005. The second series refers to the process for approving university-specific degrees. The AGUCM holds 49 boxes of items documenting the organisation of university-specific neurology programmes and dated between 1989 and 2006. We must be aware in such cases that these degrees were not necessarily the responsibility of the Faculty of Medicine. Similarly, classes pertaining to the MS degrees in Child Neuropsychology or in Cognitive Neuropsychology, and those for an Expert Certificate in Neuropsychological Techniques, were offered by the Faculty of Psychology. The Expert Certificate in Neurological Physiotherapy was awarded by the School of Nursing, Physiotherapy, and Podology. The Faculty of Medicine was responsible for awarding the MS degree in Paediatric Neurology. In addition to the above documents, we find financial statements (31 boxes dated 1991 to

Curso de 1893 a 1894
Universidad Central - Facultad de Medicina
Estudios Médicos complementarios

<i>Asignaturas</i>	<i>Profesores</i>	<i>Lecciones teóricas</i>		<i>Lecciones prácticas</i>		<i>Examen</i>	<i>Observ.</i>
		<i>Locales</i>	<i>Días</i>	<i>Locales</i>	<i>Días</i>		
<i>Dermatología y Afiliografía</i>	<i>D. Juan Ojeda y Suarez</i>	<i>Salida de Prados</i>	<i>Martes y Jueves</i>	<i>San Juan de Dios</i>	<i>Viernes y Sabado a las 10 y 12 horas</i>		
<i>Neurología y fisiología humana</i>	<i>D. Jaime Vea y Lopez</i>	<i>Salida de Prados</i>	<i>Martes y Jueves</i>	<i>Hospital provincial</i>	<i>Viernes y Sabado a las 10 y 12 horas</i>		
<i>Oftalmología</i>	<i>D. Superioriano y Navas</i>	<i>Salida de Prados</i>	<i>Martes y Jueves</i>	<i>Hospital provincial</i>	<i>Viernes y Sabado a las 10 y 12 horas</i>		



El Decano asistido
Juan Calleja

Madrid 1.º de Octubre de 1893.
El Rector de la Facultad
Federico Oloniz

Figure 1. Announcement presenting the special subjects listed as complementary studies in medicine. 1893-1894. General Archive of the Complutense University of Madrid.

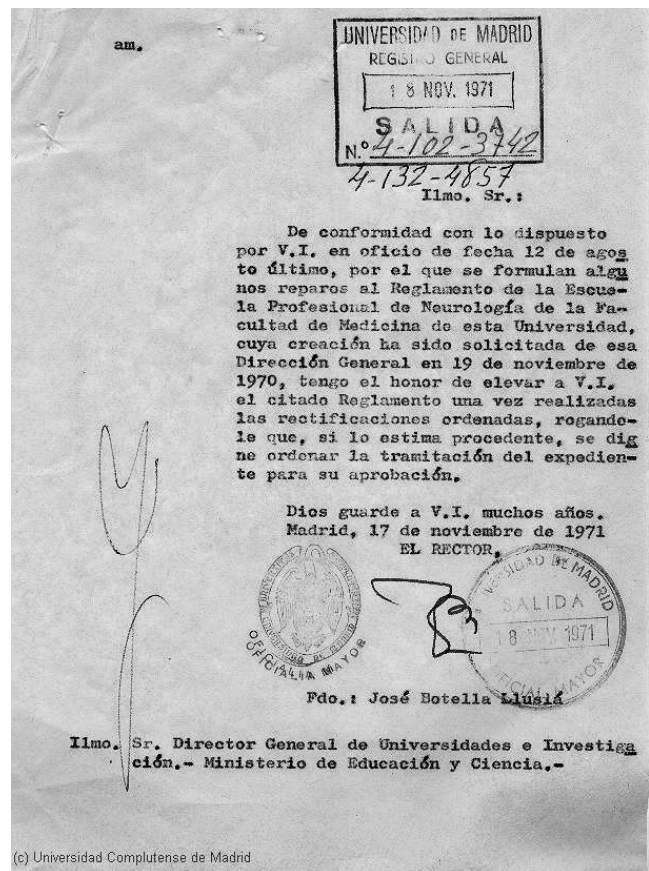
2003) and student registration files (14 boxes dated 1997 to 2003).

The section on what might be considered 'normal' paperwork, or that derived from daily procedures carried out by professors and researchers at the university, would be incomplete without a mention of research. I should point out, however, that items of this type have not yet been studied sufficiently from an archivist's point of view. Generally speaking, the descriptions in our possession reflect the needs of the administrative divisions that created these documents, which are mainly research operations offices. These divisions tend to identify research projects by the Faculty or centre responsible for them, the call for proposals in which they were presented, or by their administrative status, meaning whether or not financing was approved. This explains why we only find one specific reference to our subject: a research project on degenerative neurological disease presented before La Caixa Foundation in 2004 (AGUCM reference 149/06-33). However, there are as many as 175 references to research projects undertaken by the Faculty of Medicine between 1968 and 2010, plus the Faculty of Psychology's 120 file boxes dated 1976 to 2010. In these cases, researchers would have to view the documents directly to identify any projects with neurological subject matter.

The files mentioned above constitute the largest part of the AGUCM's neurology-related documents. And yet we still find other, more isolated, documents that are no less interesting. I will conclude by describing a few key examples. First, we find the inaugural address of the IV Neurosurgical Seminar, held in September 2000 (AGUCM catalogue no. 12/04-09); the report from a minor study in the neurobiology laboratory in 1989 (AGUCM catalogue no. 16/00-147), and the document detailing the instalment of a neuroradiological device in Hospital Clínico in November 1975 (16/00-183). Even more relevant are the dossiers detailing the creation and administrative coordination of the different neurology research and teaching institutions linked to the university. The earliest of these initiatives was the School of Neurosurgery, which was also the only one to have been truly operational.⁹ The school was created in 1964, and there are three different dossiers including its statutes and by-laws, the nomination process for directors and professors, and the first programme of studies. The most recent items

date to 1980 (AGUCM catalogue nos. OM-2246; OM-1889; P-974, 6).

There was an initiative to create a Professional School of Neurology in 1971 to accompany the Institute, but the project was never approved (AGUCM catalogue no. OM-1877, 2) (Figure 2). Here, the documents show that two professors advocated the creation of the school at the same time and presented different proposals to the Office of the Chancellor. The Chancellor then asked them to present a joint proposal to the Ministry of Education. The circumstances seem to indicate a major difference of opinions between the professors, and we cannot rule out the possibility that this may have had something to do with the fact that the project was turned down. Last of all, from 1995, we find a proposal for the creation of an Institute of Neurosciences. This project was also turned down, but much less informa-



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Figure 2. File documenting an unsuccessful attempt at creating a Professional School of Neurology. 1970-1971. General Archive of the Complutense

tion is available in this case (AGUCM catalogue no. 11/03-14).

Conclusions

In summary, we observe that the documents referring to neurology teaching and research at Complutense University very rarely pre-date the mid-1960s, when neurology was added to the medical programme as a new discipline. We only find a few isolated references from earlier years, as well as allusions to neurology in the teaching and research in related fields. Once neurology had been fully accepted as a subject by the university, its paper trail became far easier to follow. On the one hand, items in the archive document daily activities: exam records, expense accounts, student registration files, etc. On the other hand, they reveal the different attempts at formalising neurological training and research, first through different institutes which had varying degrees of success, and second, after the University Reform Law was passed in 1983, by means of university-specific degrees and official medical specialties.

Taking everything into account, the documents available to us hint at several potential lines of research. The most obvious may be the study of how neurology gradually broke ties with related areas, such as psychology, to become an independent field of medicine. This evolutionary process can be seen in the implementation of different types of specialised training units: department chairs, classes, master's degrees, research centres, and so on. Another line of research might involve identifying and cataloguing the economic means dedicated to neurology research and teaching in our university. Such a study could be based on construction work records and receipts from purchased material, together with the university's unquestionably dry but very useful

financial records. A third possibility could be to follow the career paths of neurologists who studied or taught in our university. However, this would require identifying and coordinating with those neurologists to gain permission to use their academic transcripts or personnel files. In summary, it is possible to chronicle the transformation of the field of neurology and its presence in programmes of study by examining course structure and scheduling documents, but finding references to neurology among the archive's numerous documents will require minute analysis of their content.

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the birth of photography
to the first film recordings



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