

Dr. Luisito O. Llido: Architect of Clinical Nutrition Medicine in the Philippines

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of Philippine healthcare, few individuals have shaped the course of clinical nutrition as profoundly as Dr. Luisito O. Llido. A respected physician and surgeon, Dr. Llido is widely recognized as the Father of Clinical Nutrition in the Philippines- a title earned through decades of pioneering work, visionary leadership, and unwavering dedication to improving patient care through nutrition.

Dr. Llido's journey into clinical nutrition began in 1986 when he launched the Parenteral Nutrition Program at St. Luke's Medical Center, Quezon City. This initiative marked the beginning of structured nutrition support in Philippine hospitals. By 1992, he had established the institution's first multidisciplinary Nutrition Support Team (NST), integrating physicians, dietitians, nurses, and pharmacists to deliver coordinated, evidence-based nutrition care.

His innovation extended to the digitalization of nutrition surveillance, a groundbreaking move that enabled every inpatient to be screened for nutrition-related risks. Through this system, timely referrals to Clinical Nutrition Services became standard practice, streamlining interventions and improving outcomes.

Dr. Llido firmly believed that the perennial problem of hospital malnutrition, whether chronic or disease-related, could only be addressed through comprehensive, multidisciplinary education and collaboration. He emphasized that physicians must play a central and active role in nutrition management- not in isolation, but in partnership with clinical dietitians, nurses, and clinical pharmacists.

He was a passionate advocate for empowering dietitians, recognizing their expertise as essential in the holistic nutrition care of patients. Dr. Llido consistently promoted their inclusion in clinical decision-making, ensuring that nutrition interventions were not only medically sound but also nutritionally optimized. His leadership helped elevate the role of dietitians from supportive to strategic, fostering mutual respect and collaboration across disciplines.

Together with dedicated nutrition leaders, Dr. Llido led efforts to educate physicians on the science and practice of clinical nutrition, integrating it into medical and surgical care and later on, pediatric care in the hospital. His advocacy helped shift the perception of nutrition from a supportive service to a critical component of patient recovery and disease management.

In 2000, Dr. Llido founded the Nutrition Support Fellowship Program (now called Medical Nutrition Fellowship Training Program), the first of its kind in the Philippines and in Asia. This program has since produced a generation of nutrition-focused physicians who now lead services in major hospitals nationwide. Under his mentorship, fellows are trained not only in clinical expertise but also in research, education, communication, and leadership- making the program a model for integrating nutrition into hospital-wide patient care.

Recognizing the need for advanced, multidisciplinary education, Dr. Llido co-founded the Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition (MSCN) at the Philippine Women's University (PWU) in 2005, alongside former Dean Leonora Panlasigui of the School of Nutrition. This program welcomed physicians, dietitians, nurses, and pharmacists, reflecting Dr. Llido's belief that optimal nutrition care requires collaborative expertise.

Dr. Llido's influence extended to policy and standards. As Chairman of the Philippine Board of Clinical Nutrition (PBCN), now called Philippine Medical Nutrition Physicians (PCMNP), he played a pivotal role in standardizing clinical nutrition practices and setting benchmarks for certification among physicians. His leadership helped expand the Fellowship program and institutionalize NSTs across the country.

He also contributed to surgical nutrition through the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS), where he helped design and implement the Surgical Nutrition Curriculum. As Head of the Committee on Surgical Training, he ensured that nutrition was embedded in surgical education, cascading this curriculum nationwide.

Dr. Llido co-founded the Philippine Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (PhilSPEN), serving as its second president. Under his leadership, PhilSPEN became a hub for education, research, and advocacy- launching programs like Basic Nutrition Support (BNS) and Advanced Nutrition Therapy (ANT), and promoting best practices in nutrition management in the country.

He also conceptualized the PhilSPEN website, a digital platform for professional development, publications, and collaboration. His vision helped unify the clinical nutrition community and connect it with global networks.

Internationally, Dr. Llido was a founding member of the Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition Society of Asia (PENSA), contributing to regional standards and representing the Philippines in global discussions on nutrition care. In 2017, he was honored as the Dr. Chomchark Chuntrasakul Professorial Lecturer by PENSA, and in 2021, he received recognition from the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) for his lifelong contributions.

Championing Clinical Nutrition Research and Global Collaboration

Dr. Luisito O. Llido's commitment to clinical nutrition extended far beyond hospital walls and training programs- he was a staunch advocate for research and international collaboration. His belief in evidence-based practice drove him to contribute significantly to both local and global scientific literature in the field of nutrition.

Among his most notable contributions was his involvement in the Global Leadership Initiative on Malnutrition (GLIM), where he co-authored a widely cited consensus report published in the Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (JPEN). This landmark paper helped establish standardized diagnostic criteria for malnutrition in clinical settings worldwide, reflecting Dr. Llido's influence on global nutrition policy and practice.

His published works include numerous local and international articles, with abstracts and full papers that have been referenced across Asia and beyond. These publications not only advanced clinical understanding but also served as foundational texts for training and policy development in nutrition support.

Dr. Llido's dedication to scholarship also extended to peer review, where he served as a reviewer for esteemed journals in clinical nutrition and surgery. His critical insights helped uphold the rigor and relevance of emerging research, further cementing his reputation as a thought leader in the field.

Through PhilSPEN, Dr. Llido actively promoted research initiatives and fostered collaboration with international nutrition societies such as ASPEN, ESPEN, and PENSA. His vision for PhilSPEN included not only education and advocacy but also the creation of platforms for Filipino researchers to engage with the global scientific community.

Dr. Llido's legacy in research is a testament to his belief that science must guide practice, and that collaboration across

borders is essential to solving the complex challenges of malnutrition and nutrition-related diseases.

Dr. Llido's legacy is not only institutional- it is deeply personal. His mentorship has shaped the careers of countless professionals, and his innovations have improved the lives of thousands of patients. His work continues to inspire clinicians, educators, and researchers to elevate nutrition as a cornerstone of healing.

As One Nutrition Journal launches its maiden issue, we pay tribute to Dr. Luisito O. Llido - a visionary whose brilliance, compassion, and dedication have nourished the soul of Philippine nutritional medicine.