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Apunts Med Esport. 2015;**50(188)**:121-122

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MEDICINA DE L'ESPORT
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EDITORIAL

In Memoriam: Professor Carles Vallbona i Calbó

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There are prominent figures in the promotion of physical activity, and it can be said that Doctor Carles Vallbona was one of them in Catalonia. Even though he lived more than 10,000 kilometres away, he never missed any working session or meeting, and he attended them with enviable energy and vitality. His implication, advice and leadership skills really helped implementing programmes to improve health through physical activity. He was essential to accomplish many actions of that kind in our country.

Today we feel a bit lonely as scientists, and we will have to learn to live with the absence of Professor Vallbona, a key figure in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and diet and, particularly, of active ageing. He earned many distinctions — Creu de Sant Jordi, given by the Generalitat de Catalunya, was the last among them — but we do not want to compile his merits, but to share with you these lines and to remember a great person and an excellent and brilliant professional. We received the news of his death during the summer holidays, and the speed with which it spread within the Catalan and the international scientific community demonstrates that he left not only a professional but also a personal mark.

This has been a different summer; with mixed feelings of sadness and joy, we have recalled the pleasure of his conversation, which always embraced us kindly with the precise words of a man who really understood the meaning of sharing. Professor Vallbona knew how to spread scientific knowledge with simple words and useful examples, and exercising a subtle and intelligent leadership with one permanent goal: to improve people's health.

One of us received the sad news when only a few meters were left for her to reach a peak; she wistfully and silently decided to dedicate the ascension to his memory. Another of us received the news when she was sailing in the deep blue sea, surrounded by the immensity of water, which usually makes it all look so small in comparison. And possibly because of that, despite feeling the pain of loss, she receives it with the smile of someone who will keep forever the good moments and the knowledge shared with a person who had been full of life.

The last time we met, he showed us the pictures of a skiing holiday with his children and grandchildren with the pride of a grandfather who could enjoy sport with the kids in his family. He always reminded us about the need to be

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Figure 1 Barcelona, 2012.



Figure 2 Vail, Colorado, 2012.

active regardless of the age, and always insisted that we did not have to put up barriers in front of us, not even if we suffered from illnesses, as physical exercise is adaptable.

He was an excellent doctor, an expert scientist, a flawless professor and, above all, a great person, and an enthusiastic wise man, always with a smile in his face, full of energy, vital and active: he practised what he preached. Always leading by the example, he worked until the last moment and we think that he almost accomplished what he had always said he would: that he would leave healthy and active.

We share with you one of the last pictures we took of him in Barcelona — he gave us permission to use it — and also a picture his children sent us from his last skiing holidays.

We offer you as well the possibility of visualizing these videos: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.apunts.2015.10.001.