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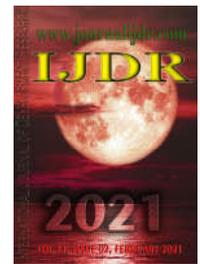
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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DID HEMINGWAY EXPOSE FEATURES OF PAIN IN THE PROTAGONIST OF "THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA"?

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To record the possible relationship between the author's health history and the main character of the book and motivate research on the causes of pain and neuropathy. **Background:** This year marks the 122nd anniversary of the birth of Ernest Hemingway and the 67th anniversary of the Nobel Prize for Literature. "The Old Man and the Sea" was his last novel, which was written in 1951 during his stint in Cuba and published in 1952. A sufferer of several health conditions, such as diabetes mellitus, the author emphasized the pain of its main personage in the work. **Design/Methods:** We reviewed the English, Spanish, and Portuguese versions of "The Old Man and the Sea" for descriptors of pain-related symptoms. **Results:** The narrative is centered on the story of Santiago, an old Cuban fisherman. After 84 days without getting a prey, the old man catches an enormous Marlin fish of almost 1550 pounds after being urged by a young companion to keep trying. After hours of fighting, Santiago managed to anchor the fish in his boat and left the Cuban coast. The book, with a total of 27000 words, expresses the pain in 30 of them. **Conclusions:** The book secured Hemingway the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and later the Nobel of Literature. It was a great and simple work that portrayed the noble characteristics of human beings. We are not sure of the neuropathy (diabetic or other etiology) the author was suffering from, but we can confirm the greatness of his work.

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INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the book "The Old Man and the Sea". This was the last novel by Ernest Hemingway that was written in 1951 during his stay in Cuba and published in 1952 and earned him the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. After writing this book, the author sent his editor the following note: "I know this is the best I can write in my entire life." (Baker, 1969) That was not a mistake; for many, the book was a revival like Hemingway's "Song of the Swan," since it did not receive good reviews or public reception for a long period (Pompermaie). "The old man and the sea"³ was the last great work of fiction by "Papa Doc" that was published while he was still alive. A sufferer of several health problems, including diabetes mellitus, the author highlights the pain of his main character in the book, which will be discussed in this paper.

The book may reflect Hemingway's last years of life, marked by his passion for Cuba. Despite the brevity of the narrative, the story of old Santiago, its protagonist, has been interpreted as a metaphor for the author's artistic process and, ultimately, the human condition itself. "Work is seen as an allegory of the difficulty of reaching the goal, of the dream of what would be a great job, recognized by others", says Puglia (Pompermaie). "At the same time, it is a painful accomplishment, full of dread of the fear of reaching to the beach and just find the skeleton of your work". The autobiographical relations contained in the book are latent not only in the protagonist's comorbidities; Santiago was probably inspired by Gregório Fuentes, the legendary yacht captain and friend of the author, and Pilar, the captain of his fishing boat. Like the character, the writer's fishing companion was experienced and thin, had blue eyes, and was born in the Canary Islands in Spain. A few months before his death, at the age of 104, he commented that the idea of "The old man and the sea" came from Hemingway on a fishing day when the two were at sea

with a fisherman and a boy sailing in a rowing boat. Our goal was to research the possible relationship between the author's illnesses and the characteristics expressed in the main character of "The Old Man and the Sea," and we reviewed the English, Spanish, and Portuguese versions for pain-related symptom descriptors.

The author: Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, United States. The son of a doctor, Clarence Hemingway, he accompanied his father on visits to the sick and insisted that he practiced outdoor activities such as hunting, shooting, and fishing. His mother, Grace, instilled in him a familiarity with literature. In the 1920s, throughout his travels in Europe and the United States, he became part of the group of expatriate Americans in Paris, beginning the production of books such as "The Sun Also Rises" (1926) and "Goodbye to Arms" (1929). In 1939, the author went to live on a farm 25km from Havana with his third wife, journalist, and writer, Martha Gellhorn. The following year, he went to cover the Second World War in Europe and returned to the island in 1946, this time with his fourth wife Mary Welsh, also a journalist and writer (Baker, 1969). During his stay in Cuba, specifically in 1952, Hemingway wrote his most famous work: "The Old Man and the Sea." The following year, he received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In 1960, at the beginning of the Cold War and the bad blood between Cuba and the United States, Hemingway left Cuba and went to Ketchum, Idaho, United States. In an interview with The New York Times in 1999, the writer's son, Patrick Hemingway, reported that leaving Cuba was one of the reasons for his father's depression, which culminated in his suicide on July 2, 1961 (Pompermaie). During his life, in his arts, Hemingway always wrote simply and succinctly, supporting the "economics of words." He is considered a great influencer of the contemporary style.

The old man and the sea: The book tells the story of Santiago, the old fisherman, who after 84 days without a prey, caught a Marlin fish weighing almost seven hundred kilos. After hours of a fight that almost cost him, Santiago managed to moor the prey in his boat and left for land. This is the story of a man who lived with the solitude of the high seas, his dreams and thoughts, his struggle for survival, and his unwavering confidence in life. With the reading, it was noticeable that Santiago's health was weak, but he did not give up fishing every day. He woke up early, had coffee, and this was, for the most part, his only meal. The reflection of the sun in the sea damaged his vision, but that did not stop him from proceeding. Santiago felt very lonely because the boy Manolin, who always accompanied him on fishing, was not present due to the failure of the last 84 days of fishing. Throughout history, Santiago had episodes of delirium represented in the moments when he talked with birds, fish, sharks, and himself aloud. He also repeated to himself that he needed to remember to eat to be strong and continue. The major highlight of the novel is the number of times "pain" occurred. In total, there were 30 citations. This "pain" was manifested in the dorsal region and the foot, but it was most pronounced in the left hand. Santiago suffered numbness and stiffness that diminished when he immersed his hands in the waters of the sea. This situation may be related to the author's neuropathic pain. The fisherman's persistence was emphasized when he tried to return to the coast with the giant fish and fought sharks that wanted to eat his prey. After a long battle to save Marlin, he reached the coast exhausted and only with the animal's carcass. This, which was the last book by Hemingway published while he was still alive, is the perfect expression of the author's motto: "A man can be destroyed, but never defeated." In addition, the book suggests that the protagonist had delusions and neuropathic pain, which were possible reflections of the author's health.

DISCUSSION

Alcoholism, age, diabetes, mood disorders, and several serious accidents, including two plane crashes, had a debilitating effect on Hemingway.

During the 1950s, he became depressed, and the most unpleasant aspects of his nature came to the fore.^{4,5,6} The autobiographical relationships contained in the book are latent not only in the comorbidities of the protagonist, Santiago, probably inspired by Gregório Fuentes, the legendary yacht captain and friend of the author, and Pilar, the captain of his fishing boat. Like the character, the writer's fishing companion was experienced and thin; he had blue eyes and was born in the Canary Islands. A few months before his death, at the age of 104 years, he commented that the idea of "The Old Man and the Sea" was conceived by Hemingway on a fishing day when the two were at sea with a fisherman and a boy sailing in a rowing boat. In 1950, Ernest was considered a decadent writer of criticism. After living in Cuba for 10 years, he had not published anything since his last successful novel ("For Whom the Bell Tolls"). A decade later, he resurfaced with "On the Other Shore, among the Trees" but received little praise. It is known that the life experiences, health conditions, and personality characteristics of some writers and the socio-historical moment in which the work was written are reflected in their literary works. Fyodor Dostoevsky, (Fyodor Dostoevsky) in his character, Prince Liév Nikoláievitch Michkin (Prince Michkin), in the novel "The Idiot", introduces us to a person with epilepsy and pulmonary tuberculosis, di-seases with which he had personal and familial experiences. Edgar Allan Poe (Edgar Allan Poe, 1843) introduced us to the main character of his work, "The Black Cat," as a person transformed and upset by alcohol abuse; he projected in this, his feelings of guilt, madness, terror, and alcohol abuse poetically and masterfully, however, with a catastrophic ending like that of his personal life. This reasoning helps us to identify the possible nature of pain in the hands of Santiago, the protagonist in Ernest Hemingway's novel "The Old Man and the Sea," who suffered multiple diseases and was a lover of sport fishing.

The main limitation in defining Santiago's pain as neuropathic or noci-ceptive is clinical, as some of the propaedeutic characteristics of pain and the physical examination data would be missing. Santiago, however, during his difficult task of fishing for gigantic fish, possibly a whale shark, on several oc-casions complained of pain in his hands. Typically, according to Hemingway's narrative, the pain intensified with the opening and closing of the hands and was relieved with the repetitive movements of the fingers, if accompanied by cramps, or after placing his hands in the sea with the boat in movement and when hand sensitivity was preserved. An important highlight of the nature of the pain was the need for Santiago to move his hands gently to "detach" them from the oars, which characterizes joint stiffness. Due to the marked characteristics of pain in an old fisherman, the hand pain is considered to be of nociceptive origin, probably due to osteoarthritis. The rigidity of rest after supporting the oars and the improvement with repeated movements and after placing the hands in the sea ("hydrotherapy") are cardi-nal clinical signs of osteoarthritis of the hands (Altman, m 1990; Kolasinski *et al.*, 2010). On the other hand, research on fishermen indicates a high prevalence of skeletal muscle diseases such as rheumatism and traumatic hand injuries related to their work. (Frantzeskou *et al.*, 2011; Sandsund, 2019). Hand cramps, mentioned by Santiago, could be interpreted as tingling, which would make one think of neuropathic pain. However, pain in the whole hand, the absence of a loss of muscle strength, stiffness at rest, improvement in pain with effort, and subjective sensitivity preserved in the hands are clinical data that rule out its neuropathic origin. Neuropathic pain due to peripheral nerve damage is characterized by the presence of positive and negative symp-toms in an area of the hand. The pain increases with wrist movements and may be accompanied by allodynia and hyperalgesia (Wang, 2020; Bannister, 2020).

These criteria were not present in Santiago; we feel the pain in the who-le hand, and the pain improves when rubbing one hand against the other ac-companied by the massage of the seawater. On the other hand, we cannot ex-plore the sensitivity, which is necessary for the definition of neuropathic pain. The character stated that his legs "are perfect," which allows us to rule out polyneuropathy as a cause of pain since in most cases the lower limbs are injured.

Because fishing is a profession that uses the hands a lot, it is important to rule out pain from focal occupational dystonia of the hand. However, in Pu-bMed (uni-terms used: “fisherman and focal dystonia of the hand”), we did not find such an association, and dystonia or muscular contractures would have to be absent from Santiago's complaints for the diagnosis of dystonic pain (Pérez-de-Heredia-Torres, 2020). We are not sure if the author was suffering from diabetic neuropathy, but we can confirm the greatness of his work.

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