

# DERMATOLOGIC HISTORY

## The Legacy of Lucio and Latapí: A Brief History

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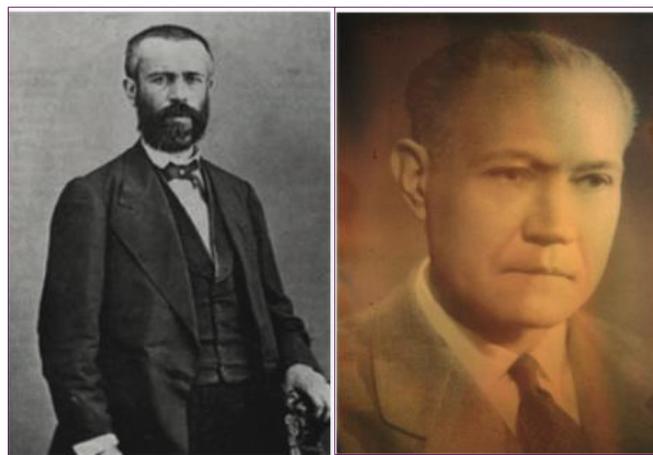
Rafael Lucio Nájera and Fernando Latapí contributed greatly to the knowledge about a specific form of diffuse lepromatous leprosy, now known as Lucio-Latapí leprosy. This condition is characterized by generalized, diffuse infiltration without nodules, alopecia of the eyebrows, eyelashes, and body, and anhidrosis and dysesthesias.<sup>1</sup> It can also have a reactional state known as Lucio's phenomenon, which presents with necrotic erythema and ulceration of vessels.<sup>1</sup> Lucio, a Mexican physician, published work describing this type of leprosy in 1851.<sup>1</sup> However, this condition was mostly isolated to Mexico and Costa Rica.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, it garnered little attention until it was brought to light again by Latapí in 1936.<sup>1</sup>

Lucio graduated from the Establishment of Medical Sciences in Mexico City.<sup>2</sup> He was the director of San Lazaro Hospital where he extensively researched leprosy.<sup>2</sup> He and Dr. Ignacio Alvarado published work describing different types of leprosy, including Lucio-Latapí leprosy. This publication provided clinical descriptions and insights into pathogenesis, therapeutic concepts, and epidemiology that are relevant to date and that served as a foundation for other scholars.<sup>3</sup>

Latapí founded the Mexican Society of Dermatology and the Mexican School of Leprology.<sup>2</sup> The latter aimed to change laws

against people with leprosy and promote respectful treatment towards them.<sup>2</sup> He worked to abolish misconceptions about leprosy, and created brigades to diagnose thousands of patients.<sup>2</sup> At the Mexican Association of Action Against Leprosy, he successfully treated many patients in a time when leprosy was thought to be incurable.<sup>2</sup> This center became the Ladislao De La Pascua Dermatological Center, which continues to teach Mexican dermatologists today.<sup>2</sup>

These physicians are pioneers in the field of lepromatous disease. Their work also reminds us of the physician's role in educating and advocating for our patients.



**Figure 1.** Rafael Lucio Nájera (left) and Fernando Latapí (right)<sup>2</sup>

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** None

**Funding:** None

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