
Zoom On: Dr Javier T. Dávila



Dr Javier Dávila

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Dr Javier Dávila is an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Throughout the 2000s he advised to Mexico's Secretaries of Health and was Head of Medical Education, Research and Health Public Policies in Mexico. From 2012 to 2015, he served as Medical Director of the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS). Presently, Dr Dávila is working to promote the culture of safety in Mexico with the Patient Safety Movement Foundation's (PSMF) founder Joe Kiani. Dr Dávila has been Ambassador of PSMF in Mexico since 2016.

What are your key areas of interest and research?

I used to be a craniofacial surgeon with expertise in congenital deformities and facial trauma. My last job was in public administration – as Medical Director at the Social Security Institute of Mexico. These days, though, I no longer do research or see patients. I currently work with Joe Kiani as a member of the PSMF's Board of Directors and Ambassador. My role here in Mexico is now to promote the culture of safety, and to get more healthcare organisations and hospitals on board. I am also working on joining forces with the government of Mexico to establish both private and public partnerships to support PSMF's mission and improve hospital safety.

What are the major challenges in your field?

There are many challenges here in Mexico for hospitals, but patient safety is the primary goal. We are working towards the establishment of good public policies, which promote a culture of safety. Of course, there is a financial and budgetary challenge for different hospital programmes, but the main challenge is to put the culture of safety on the map via the establishment of good public policies. I used to work with healthcare services and safety – regarding hospital certification, etc – and it's a dynamic process. Whether small or large, hospitals require regulation to establish a culture of safety as a priority. That's why we work very closely with the General Health Council in Mexico – a very important structure – on certification of hospitals. This is a role that we did not have in the past.

What is your top management tip?

Spread the word about culture, and convince managers – in this case, clinicians and nurses who are in permanent contact with patients and organisations of patients – to establish a close relationship with the PSMF Actionable Patient Safety Solutions ([APSS](#)). Importantly, clinicians and nurses should work to establish a programme geared towards every one of the proposed APSS that have been developed by PSMF to overcome patient safety challenges facing hospitals today.

What would you single out as a career highlight?

The highlight of my career is to establish a priority that patient safety is the nodal chord – to save lives, safety is the main goal. We have to do everything we can, every day, in the whole country of Mexico, with the complete national health services – both public and private – to establish this nodal chord. In other words, patient safety is our main goal, and a culture of safety is the only way to achieve this goal -- though having enough resources, both human resources and budget, is important, too.

If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

I am a craniofacial surgeon, but if I had not gone into this field, I would have wanted to work in a diplomatic role, for example, as a member of the United Nations.

What are your personal interests outside of work?

Read biography and history books, watch documentaries, and spend time with my family as much as we can – going out of the city on weekends or playing sports.

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Your favourite quote?

There is a great quote by the famous artist, Michelangelo: "Perfection is no small thing, but it is made of little things." It reflects what we are doing at PSMF. To succeed is not enough, and perfection is not one small thing or big thing – but little things. That quote expresses how we are thinking and the many steps we are taking to improve patient safety in Mexico.

Published on : Mon, 30 Mar 2020