

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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## PATRICIA GUTIERREZ-ONTALVILLA, MD, PHD



Dr. Gutierrez-Ontalvilla is a plastic surgeon based in Valencia, Spain, who is also currently serving as the Assistant National Secretary for Spain. She is well-known to both patients and surgeons around the world for her descriptive and informative videos on her Instagram handle @dragutierrezontalvilla. We are very pleased to present our interview with her.

- Nina Naidu, MD - Editor

**How and why did you decide to become a plastic surgeon? Did you have a mentor who encouraged you to enter the field?**

In Spain, when I studied medicine, I had only one class explaining what plastic surgery was. I wanted to become a heart surgeon like my uncle (and mentor) Ramiro. Nevertheless, he told me not to follow his steps because in his opinion,



*Photo with my uncle, Ramiro, a heart surgeon. In this photo, I was 21 and was about to start the 4th course of medicine. It's called in Spain "step of the equator."*

I was more creative and I was going to need a specialty that I could enjoy more. He told me how amazed he was when a plastic surgeon at his hospital performed a latissimus dorsi pedicled flap to

cover a gunshot injury and that story for me was like magic! That's when I decided I wanted to be a plastic surgeon.

**What is your main area of interest in plastic surgery? Please tell us a little about your practice - where it is, and the types of patients you see?**

I love performing lipofilling. My main interested areas are lipofilling in breast, composite breast augmentation, lipofilling in tuberous breast and intimate surgery. I live in Valencia, Spain. I work in Hospital La Fe performing pediatric plastic surgery and I also have my private practice. We recently moved to a bigger and more central office. Closeness to my patients is very important to me, so in this new office I



*My office*

decided to remove my office desk and use a lower table instead. I also replaced the visitor chairs with some cozy armchairs. To be honest, I didn't know how patients were going to react. They were surprised at first, but they got so comfortable that my office staff had to politely cut our conversation because

patients didn't want to leave. My patients go from minors (16-18 years old) to mature women. The young patients come accompanied by their parents and usually ask for breast and labia minora hypertrophy correction. The older patients want to refresh their physical appearance with natural results.

**We heard that you are finishing your PhD as well! Please tell us about the area of study you selected for your degree.**

I'm finishing my PhD. I hope to defend it in September 2020. My doctoral thesis is a clinical trial to demonstrate the benefits of adipose derived stem cells in patients with severe vulvar lichen sclerosis. So far, I have very promising results and I pledge to publish them once I defended my thesis.

**You are well-known to many of our members as you have a large following on social media. Your amazing videos in particular have become legendary. Can you tell us about the videos and who films them for you?**

The secret of my videos: I decided to start my social networks when I attended a lecture and they said that more than

80% of the information about plastic surgery was spread by non-plastic surgeons. That's when I became aware of our responsibility as plastic surgeons to show our specialty in an honest way. From that moment on, a member of my team records every surgery. He also owns a digital marketing agency and leaves space in his agenda to come with us to the operating room. He knows perfectly the ideas I want to transmit to my followers. I always say that my Instagram is like a window into my surgery suite. But there is a little secret: this well-trained team member is my husband!

**Please tell us about some of your favorite activities outside of work.**

I love snowboarding! Six years ago, I had an accident while skiing and hurt both knees badly. Doctors forbade me to ski again, but since I love the snow so much, I learned snowboarding in my 40s! For me, snowboarding is like a dance with the mountain. I'm also learning Krav maga. It's a form of self-defense and physical training developed by the Israeli army in the 1940s, based on the use of reflexive responses to threatening situations . . . but I'm still a rookie!



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