



HUMANS OF THE ROYAL

Professor Aldo Vacca (1941 - 2014)

Professor Aldo Vacca was a Consultant Obstetrician at Brisbane's Royal Women's Hospital and an Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at University of Queensland (UQ). He is celebrated as a trailblazer in the vacuum method for operative vaginal delivery, a technology now used worldwide in about 10 percent of births.

After completing his general medical training at UQ, Vacca worked for eight years in Papua New Guinea as a General Practitioner and subsequently within the Public Health Department in the field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

As a General Practitioner, he developed an appreciation of the clinical skills and self-sufficiency required by clinicians working in remote areas as well as an awareness of the difficulties faced by them as a result of their isolation.

During his time in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Port Moresby General Hospital, he assisted with the supervision and review of the Maternal Death Register, which included an investigation into the causes of all reported maternal deaths. This led to the development of his major interests in management of labour and in operative vaginal delivery.

Vacca was originally introduced to the potential of the obstetric vacuum extractor by Dr GC Bird with whom he worked in Papua New Guinea. From that time, he devoted much of his time to improving the teaching and training of vacuum extraction. His investigations were published extensively, and he also played a hand in developing an interactive computer program for self-directed learning.

Through his work with vacuum-assisted delivery, Vacca has been credited with preventing an estimated 40,000 cases of major permanent maternal trauma in Australia alone.

His recognition for this came in 2007, when he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for "services to medicine in the field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, particularly through the research and promotion of the technique of vacuum extraction delivery in Obstetric practice".

Professor Aldo Vacca's contributions in the field of women's health care are unparalleled. Throughout his amazing career, he helped an immeasurable number of doctors, women and babies.

