

CASTROJIEVO NEEDLE HOLDERS

Written by: David O'Regan, MD

These are finger-held needle holders that has become **the instrument of choice for surgeon doing fine stitching** – microvascular, ophthalmic, and cardiac surgery. They are held like a pencil but with extended fingers caressing a cross-hatched barrel handle to enable control helped by the fineness of their tip and the mechanism of their handle which allows the **jaws to be activated without effort**. Thanks to the simple spring mechanism they can be opened and closed with ease – this reduces fatigue during long operations and enables precision and accuracy.



Ramón Castroviejo Briones was born on the 24th of August 1904, in Logrono Spain. He received his medical education at the University of Madrid in 1927. He then emigrated to the United States and worked at the Chicago Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital and the Mayo Clinic and then Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre in New York. He was a professor of clinical ophthalmology at New York University Post Graduate Medical School then the director of Ophthalmology at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City.

Although he did not do the first corneal transplant, he refined the techniques prompting the adoption of a corneal transplant as the standard treatment of severe corneal pathology. Keratoplasty was a standard technique until finer sutures became available.

The accuracy and precision of the sutures – perfectly radial and at ninety degrees to the tissue are the precepts of BBASS teaching. In corneal surgery failure to adhere to these principles results in blurred visions. His needle holder offers fine precision and is adopted by many micro and cardiac surgeons.

He published a 466-page atlas in 1966 and was also a member adviser ophthalmology Bureau Hearings and Appeals, Social Security Administration.

After his retirement, he moved to Madrid where he died in 1987.

