A Medical Labyrinth

This patient was "victor in 100 battles and founder of three republics in the continent of America." He died at age 60 of unspecified illnesses, and the cause and manner of death have been a source of confusion for nearly 200 years. He was born on Jan. 22, 1767, in Caracas, Venezuela, to a wealthy Creole family. His father was a Spanish aristocrat, and his mother was a Creole noblewoman. He was the second of five children, and he had five older sisters. None is known to have developed syphilis or tuberculosis. His sisters died at ages 65 and 89. However, the father was a notorious womanizer, and some have speculated that paralytic syphilis was the actual cause of his death, and that congenital syphilis was responsible for the death of his older sister at age 65, which is unconfirmed. Upon retirement in 2002, he began advancing his study of foreign languages and literature, and four years later he received an MSc., from the University of London. He married at age 18, only to lose his young bride 8 months later. Both parents reputedly died of tuberculosis - the father at age 56, when the patient was 2 years old and the mother at age 33, when he was 1 year old. The patient was a Spanish aristocrat, and his mother was a Creole noblewoman. He was the second of five children, and he had five older sisters. None is known to have developed syphilis or tuberculosis. His sisters died at ages 65 and 89. However, the father was a notorious womanizer, and some have speculated that paralytic syphilis was the actual cause of his death, and that congenital syphilis was responsible for the death of his older sister at age 65, which is unconfirmed.

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