

EDITORIAL

Rev Med Uruguay 1999; 15: 163-164

25 years of Revista Médica del Uruguay

Revista Médica del Uruguay celebrated its 25th anniversary. The event, that also commemorated the 100th issue of the Revista Noticias, was marked by an emotive gathering attended by many who over the years contributed to the realization, development and strengthening of the medical association's scientific journal.

Revista Médica del Uruguay was born in 1974. Mr. Juan Carlos Macedo, MD, President of Sindicato Médico del Uruguay, explains: "Revista Médica del Uruguay was founded 25 years ago. Times were different when it began, they were dark times, with the dictatorship already installed. Mr. José Pedro Cirillo, then President of Sindicato Médico del Uruguay, was its driving force. The Journal emerges as the reaffirmation of the union's presence, as legitimization of its effectiveness as an act of clarity and unity coming from our specificity, as a civilized action in times of destruction."

Its beginning goes hand in hand with the push, creativity, enthusiasm and courage of four young physicians: Macedo, Homero Bagnulo, and Hugo Dibarboure y Barret Díaz. Three issues were already circulating, with three additional issues being edited when the Sindicato Médico was intervened. With the return to democracy in 1985, Cirillo suggests the importance of restarting the publication of the RMU. From then on, many people have contributed to enhancing the journal and to making its editorial process more professional. The Editorial Board, which meets weekly, has managed to improve quality and increase the circulation of the journal, which today reaches 10,500 copies, published three times yearly. Simultaneously, the quantity of work submitted continues to grow, with careful review of all articles prior to publication.

We would like to point out a reality we regard as essential: the journal of the medical union provides a specific, unique stage for an author to present his article, which after being reviewed and then published, is available to all physicians regardless of their field of specialization. It constitutes a meeting point, a place for the convergence, integration and construction of knowledge, where every actor participates. In the words of Mr Aran Nowinski: "thus the boundaries of over-specialization are torn down so that one sees not only one's own field, but rather appreciates how each area is integrated into what is happening all around." Many people have wondered whether it is possible to carry out research in the developing countries, and our country has proven it is. Since 1974 RMU publishes original scientific studies. Professor Luis Folle once expressed in the Journal's editorial: "the fact that research comes mainly out the most advantaged areas does not mean it is exclusive to those environments. In reality, much of the progress attained by research has roots in the least technical sectors which have significant cultural reserves and an investigative spirit evidenced in gifted individuals and teams. In our small, modest yet skilled environment, our elders left us a legacy of cultural reserves and spirit. Recent economic, social and even cultural difficulties may have undermined our efforts towards this discipline. However, many efforts by individuals, small groups and communities continue".

The area of review has undoubtedly resulted in improving the Journal's quality. Contrary to what many people thought, the number of articles submitted definitely increased. Scientific studies undergo two arbitration processes, with resulting observations and comments sent to the authors. RMU was a pioneer in adopting arbitration as of 1985.

In 1998 a long desired goal was realized. The Executive Board approved the proposal by RMU to award prizes to the best original studies published in the three issues of each volume. Prizes are awarded to the articles which meet the criteria of originality, quality of the methodological design, as well as their applicability and significance as epidemiological and medical contribution at the national level. Similarly, a further prize is awarded every two years to the Young Physician, chosen among candidates who are under 35 years of age.

Also of concern to the Journal have been the ethical and human dimensions, which continue to gain importance in research related to the development of knowledge and to the accomplishments of new technologies to make this information public. To that effect, in one of the Journal's editorials, Professor Irma Gentile affirmed that "without attempting to infringe on the freedom of communication, it is necessary to find new ways to prevent the assault by progress in knowledge on our lives, other people's privacy, and human relationships".

A further line of work we have been following lately is that of organizing meetings for the editors of biomedical publications at the national level with SMU's purpose being that of opening a space for the discussion of problems and difficulties faced by biomedical publications in the country.

Last but not least, we would like to take the opportunity to emphasize that RMU is a result of the union's collective efforts, which include: authors, anonymous referees, readers and members who contribute with a part of the membership dues; the authorities of SMU; employees and advertisers; as well as the members of the Editorial Board who contribute hours of work weekly in order for each number of the journal to become a reality.

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