

EDITORIAL

**Colombia Médica is now indexed in MEDLINE/Pubmed:
A dream come true**

It was said some years ago that «the shortest line in science, as well as in love, is not the straight one»¹. This turned out to be true for *Acta Médica del Valle*, a scientific journal launched in Cali, Colombia in 1970, when Rodrigo Guerrero *et al.*, dreamt of having a periodical to disseminate medical information – primarily in southwestern Colombia. Moreover, Jorge Lega Siccar, president of this journal's first editorial committee, envisioned that manuscripts coming from the «whole republic», as well as from overseas, would arrive at the editorial office of the newly born scientific journal. And they accomplished it.

Then, Francisco Falabella *et al.*, who took the lead from 1973 until 1998, dreamt of increasing the journal's impact and reputation throughout Colombia. Thus, in 1980, the Journal's name was changed to *Colombia Médica*, and hundreds of high-quality manuscripts were published in paper form only, an uninterrupted journey lasting 25 years – from 1970 to 1995, and always supported by Universidad del Valle also located in Cali. During this time, *Colombia Médica* disseminated important and groundbreaking research. For example, in 1981, Zaninovic *et al.*, published on a disease prevalent in southwestern Colombia, characterized by spastic paraparesis, a disorder later associated with a number of environmental cofactors². This research attracted the attention of the World Health Organization to this medical problem. Also, among the dreams of this editorial group was to set up an electronic edition of *Colombia Médica*, which was posted on the web page: <http://colombiamedica.univalle.edu.co> in 1995. And this was accomplished!

During the next ten years, *Colombia Médica* was edited by Guillermo Llanos *et al.* They up-dated the dream, working hard to be certain that this journal appeared in the most important Colombian and worldwide scientific databases. And they accomplished it!!

Because of these efforts, *Colombia Médica's* editorial group worked harder and got this periodical indexed in 23 different scientific databases. In 2008, the journal was accepted by the Institute for Scientific Information

(ISI), a private institution that calculates the so-called impact factor of every journal³. It is noteworthy that the first numerical impact factor given to *Colombia Médica* by ISI increased from 0.11 in 2010 to 0.24 in 2011 (in-house calculation). It demonstrated an important increase for a 'new' journal like *Colombia Médica* in such bibliometric databases. Moreover, the H index, which measures both productivity and impact of the published work of a scientist or scholar, was 2.0. These achievements very likely account for the increase in the worldwide credibility of this journal, as reflected in the number of daily free downloads from the web site, which have increased from 400 in 2008⁴ to 2500 today, and it is still counting. Because of this, *Colombia Médica* is accepting now more English language manuscripts, as has occurred in other Latin-American journals, without disregarding Spanish publications. It is hoped that these efforts will increase journal visibility and the number of international citations. In line with these achievements, it is encouraging to see that the numbers of international collaborators have increased during the past two years, and many more referees are now from countries other than Colombia. Lastly, the time between reception and final approval of articles has been greatly improved. Looking back on these results we could say for sure that the editorial committee accomplished it!!!

Inspired by this success, a new editorial team led by Julián Herrera *et al.*, dreamt of further progress. Accordingly, in 2011, they asked the MEDLINE Review Committee to evaluate *Colombia Médica's* achievements. This Committee evaluates the suitability of journals for incorporation into MEDLINE on the basis of their geographic and scientific scope, quality, and types of contents, quality of editorial work, production quality, and language⁵⁻⁷. Needless to say, they accomplished it!!!!

It must be remembered that MEDLINE, produced by the U.S. National Library of Medicine, is the largest and most important database in the biomedical sciences; it is among the most important engines that drive the vehicle of science toward excellence. Investigators,

editors, publishers, and the scientific community are aware of this! It is also the main source for everyone undertaking biomedical literature search, as well as the main source for evidence-based medicine guidelines, meta-analysis research, and systematic reviews⁶. MEDLINE contains around 14 million records of references, beginning in 1950, obtained from more than 10,000 different journals, of which nearly 5,000 are currently indexed. However, at the end of the 20th century, no Colombian journal was indexed by MEDLINE. At present, only around 2% of the scientific journals presently indexed by MEDLINE are from Spanish speaking countries⁷, despite the large amount of research done in this geographical region. This is in part due to the quality of some manuscripts, as well as the geographical location, among other factors, precluding their citation by international journals⁸. *Colombia Médica* overcame these and many other obstacles. And with perseverance, a very important characteristic found in successful people and enterprises, the Journal obtained a place in the MEDLINE elite. And everybody accomplished it!!!!

For these, and many other reasons, we encourage scientists looking to disseminate findings from traditional or novel research, such as synthetic biology, space biomedicine, restorative medicine, robotic neuro-rehabilitation, computational biosciences, or nanotechnology, among other disciplines, to opt for *Colombia Médica* as their publication venue, following the international guidelines of biomedical publications. We are very confident that continued improvement in this journal will help to place not only *Colombia*

Médica, but Colombia as a whole, in the forefront of international biomedical sciences. Therefore, the challenge for all of us is to never to stop doing our best, because the limits of scientific publications, including the ones established for *Colombia Médica*, are endless. In doing so, we will be able to say, for sure, at the end of this century: *we made it!*

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