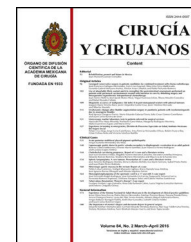




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EDITORIAL

On the fifty-eighth National Surgical Week[☆]



A propósito de la quincuagésima octava Semana Quirúrgica Nacional

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This year, 2016, Surgical Week was celebrated in the *Hospital Central Militar*, which also provided us a stage to pay homage to our armed forces.

General National Defence Secretary, Salvador Cienfuegos Zepeda, Admiral Secretary Vidal Francisco Soberón, Academician Dr. José Narro Robles, Federal Health Secretary and General Health Council Secretary were all present at the occasion.

The Mexican Academy of Surgery was founded in 1933 by people of such status as Abraham Ayala González, Gustavo Baz Prada, Gonzalo Castañeda, Dr. Manuel J. Castillejos, Dr. José Castro Villagrana, Dario Fernández, Manuel Gea González to mention but a few. These were medical ground-breakers and many of our founders were members of our armed forces. We highlight this in this editorial; the occasion having been held in the institution in which many of these great talents worked.

Medicine and surgery have developed at a dizzying pace in all areas and angles throughout the last century and to date. To cite but a few examples: in neurosurgery that which in the thirties and forties required great knowledge and clinical intuition, we can now visualise through extraordinary radiological images. Treatment can be provided using equally extraordinary and effective drugs, radiotherapy, minimally invasive surgery and arterial cannulation, leaving the patient with minimal sequelae. The great achievements of the last century such as the discovery of asepsis, anti-sepsis, analgesia, anaesthesia, antibiotics, chemotherapy,

transfusions, and intensive care have revolutionised the medical and surgical sciences, yielding dramatic results.

Mexican medicine saw the creation of the country's great institutions in the last century: the *Hospitales Federales* (Federal Hospitals), the INSALUD national institutes of health, the *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social* (Mexican Institute of Social Services) and ISSSTE (Institute of Security and Social Services for Government Workers), and the *Hospital Central Militar* (Central Military Hospital) itself. The founding of these institutions brought with it the possibility of equal access to the benefits of scientific and technological boom, as envisaged by Ignacio Chávez in 1945.

Although all these breakthroughs occurred in the last century, we are now working to improve the quality of medical care, teaching and research and to achieve better coordination in employing our available resources.

Nowadays, in contrast to almost 80 years ago, the provision of quality medical care requires effective access, assertive medicine, good coverage, high quality procedures, differentiated institutions, greater participation by the community and better preventive action.

Training procedures are required to further equip health-care personnel, to enable us to work with passion, with approachable and dedicated managers, committed to the country. We must now bring medical care to those with the fewest resources, ensure the highest quality education and unite our efforts to reduce the alarming number of teenage pregnancies and childhood mortality, and tackle the great challenges posed by obesity, overweight and chronic disease.

We must achieve greater participation on the part of society in managing and resolving their health problems. The active participation of the population will ensure that we achieve greater and better objectives.

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We must accept that decisive action is essential to improve healthcare, education and research in this century. We must ensure quality, safe procedures in a reliable environment where the institutions are transformed, prepared for when they are needed by the system, and run smoothly for the benefit of patients and their families.

The Mexican Academy of Surgery knows and is committed to all the changes and challenges faced by the National Health System. "Mexico is a great country with huge present and future possibilities. Health affects the wellbeing and development of people and the community and is one of the major responsibilities of the modern state. Health, along with education, is a social leveller that accepts neither distinctions of preference, orientation nor militancy; health is the health of society". These were the words of our Federal Health Secretary, José Narro Robles, barely a week ago.

The Mexican Academy of Surgery as a consultative body of the Federal Government is subject to the public policies set out in the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* (National Development Plan) and the *Programa Sectorial de Salud* (Health Sector Programme) in their contribution to all the points on which they can advise. As academicians we are not smug:

we wonder and reflect on how far we have come, where we want to go, where we want to be in the future and how we want to be seen in the world.

Perhaps it is difficult to answer these questions in the current environment but it is not impossible to contemplate what should be done and to work towards finding an answer.

I wonder if perhaps we should return to the beginnings of medicine and conclude that healthcare teams must be more approachable, warm, charismatic and committed. We should work towards personalised medicine, with a sense of ownership, a return to the family practitioner, encourage greater dedication, high levels of skills, vocation, delivery and imagination, and work towards the creation of inquisitive minds and leadership.

I will finish by saying that what starts must always end – let us hope that a complete end is not reached, and that the spirit, the intent and the project continue into time.

When you read this letter, it is likely that I will no longer head our corporation; I thank life and all of you for awarding me the opportunity to work for our institution. You and time will be the best judges of my service.

Many, many thanks.