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EDITORIAL

Ophthalmology in Mexico as a profession

Why issue a special edition of the REVISTA MEXICANA DE OFTALMOLOGÍA [MEXICAN JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY] dedicated to the history of this profession in Mexico? What can be told about Mexican ophthalmology to locals and visitors? Why do it now?

I would like to address the last question by saying that in 2016 we will host the World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC), the second time our country has been honoured with this event. This gives us the opportunity to get in touch with colleagues from around the world.

Seizing this opportunity, we asked ourselves what we could tell about our profession in addition to the many scientific works, conferences and other scientific activities, the reason for this conference.

We concluded that it would be meaningful to cover our history through shaping ourselves as a profession. Since this was a labour by many ophthalmologists spanning several generations, it allowed us to come together as a specialised area of medicine from very early times.

We start with an article about the founding of ophthalmology as a profession globally, so that throughout this issue we can then contrast similar events in our country and see how our specialty was formed in our national context.

In this special issue, we will see our history in the pre-Columbian eras, the rich contributions from the first Mesoamerican cultures and their attempts to understand and cure eye diseases. Their codices will give us an insight into this original past. We will also see the first New Spanish authors and how they brought about the phenomenon of the cultural and knowledge exchange between the old and new world. In these authors, whom we could call Mexican, medieval medical practices, though evolving, still prevail.

We will witness, through some of the works shown here, the founding of the first hospitals and how institutions

dedicated to eye care that are still active today were created. These were the first to receive the professionals who began to dedicate themselves almost exclusively to eye care.

Very early on, this group of professionals organised themselves and created the corporation that we know today as the Mexican Society of Ophthalmology. It is from this organisation that will come the idea for the first journals published exclusively on ophthalmology topics, a commendable effort that will lead to the creation of the forerunners of this body to spread the medical and scientific ideas that we know today as the REVISTA MEXICANA DE OFTALMOLOGÍA, which is the result of the efforts of many editors.

It is appropriate, in an issue like this one, to discuss how these professionals, whom we can already call ophthalmologists, organised the first scientific conferences in which exchanging experiences is the driving force behind these meetings. We dedicate a special space to the first WOC that took place in our country, in 1970.

It is through recounting these events that we can testify how ophthalmology developed as a profession in our country, since it is in this history that we find the building blocks of a profession: our own body of knowledge, a group of professionals dedicated to caring for and expanding this knowledge, spreading it through specialised means such as journals and conferences.

I hope that the articles shown here are of interest and contribute to a better, deeper understanding of our profession and our history.

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