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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the *Spanish Journal of Forensic Medicine* ☆

Celebrando el 50 aniversario de Revista Española de Medicina Legal

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There is no better way to celebrate the success of a project than to understand the original objectives. Therefore, when Eneko Barbería, the coordinator of the editorial committee, suggested that I, as the current president of the National Association of Forensic Physicians (Asociación Nacional de Médicos Forenses) (ANMF), write a few words for this monograph on the 50th anniversary of the *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine* (Revista Española de Medicina Legal) (REML), I thought that I should first review the first issue of the journal (Figs. 1 and 2), published on 1 October 1974, which stated the following in its editorial¹:

"Today, with the launch of this issue, the Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine is born, which, as its subtitle indicates, is the 'Organ of the National Association of Forensic Physicians'. It will serve as a vehicle of expression for all its members, who will bring it to life with their work and scientific contributions, and on whom this publication will depend entirely, even financially. The journal that is being born today will therefore be our journal, the journal of each and every forensic scientist, because we are all, absolutely all, involved in this new task and it will depend on all of us to ensure that it reaches the highest level".

If we analyse this first editorial, we can see that the first objective in creating the journal was for it to become "a vehicle of expression for all its members, who will bring it

to life...". Fifty years on, we must inquire whether the journal has served as a vehicle of expression that has allowed many of us to share our knowledge and experience with the professional community. The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that it has.

I would like to point out here that, although this has been the case throughout its history, it is worth noting the unstoppable momentum that took place in 2008, when the editorial board, chaired by Dr. Francisco Pera, took up the publication and commissioned Elsevier to publish it.² Since then, REML has published almost 500 articles covering a wide range of topics related to forensic sciences, such as pathology, thanatology, toxicology, psychiatry, injury assessment, and anthropology, among others. In addition, 8 monographic issues have been published on topics such as gender-based violence, suicide, medical professional liability, the Baremo Law 35/2015, sudden death, forensic psychiatry, the COVID-19 pandemic, and events with multiple victims³ (Fig. 3).

This success would not have been possible without the dedication of the editorial board and the editorial team, led by Amadeo Pujol, or without the contribution of a large number of authors, reviewers, and readers who have supported this vehicle of expression to become the essential platform for content on forensic medicine that it is today.

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Fig. 1 Cover of the first issue of the *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine* in 1974.

This is unquestionably the most valuable contribution that a specialised journal can make to its field of study. I am therefore keen to encourage all of you to continue contributing your work and research studies to REML. I extend this invitation particularly to the emerging generation of forensic medicine professionals at the outset of their careers. This anniversary should serve to remind us that, although our daily work is indeed demanding, we cannot neglect our responsibility to disseminate the knowledge that is inherent in our obligatory commitment to society. It is imperative that we continue to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of epidemiology, through the analysis of case studies and the undertaking of research projects. This will facilitate a deeper understanding of social issues that have a significant impact on society, such as suicide prevention, the fight against gender-based violence, sexual aggression, substance abuse, road safety, and the prevention of violent crime.

Another of the journal's founding values was its intention that it should belong to all forensic doctors *"on whom this publication will depend entirely, even financially"*.

Over the past 5 decades, the ANMF has played a pivotal role in the financing of REML, the selection of its editorial board, and the promotion of its content among the forensic

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Fig. 2 Index of the first issue of *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine* in 1974.

community. Additionally, the ANMF has served as a vital conduit for the dissemination of the journal within the profession, fostering its adoption and integration into the field. Who among us has not used these quarterly journals as a source of consultation and knowledge, highlighting and rereading its articles? Indeed, the distinctive yellow cover of REML is a prominent feature of the bookshelves of the majority of forensic doctors in this country. As a result of adapting to the new times, the reduction of costs, the implementation of an increasingly ecological conception, and the alignment with the prevailing trends in the domain of scientific publications, it was resolved in 2023 that REML would henceforth be published exclusively in an online format.⁴ The new online format did not entail substantial editorial changes, as it is an indexed journal where access to the contents is by subscription, except for ANMF members and federated associations, for whom it is free of charge through the ANMF website (www.anmf-reml.es).

It is fitting, then, to acknowledge the success of a journal that, through its dedication to the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the advancement of quality research, has become a vital resource for the development and training of forensic doctors, thereby fulfilling the third founding value outlined in the inaugural editorial *"it will depend on all of us to ensure that it reaches the highest level."* There can be no



Fig. 3 Covers of the monographs of the *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine* between 2010 and 2023.

doubt that REML has now positioned itself as a leading publication in the field of forensic medicine and forensic sciences, not only in our country, but also on the international scene.⁵

In summary, and returning to the outset, all the initial expectations of REML have been successfully surpassed. Consequently, this 50th anniversary should be, not only a celebration of an impeccable trajectory and a tribute to the professionals who have contributed to its success but also a public commitment to continuity. In light of these considerations, we at the ANMF are resolved to ensure that the journal will continue to serve for the next 50 years as an open and indispensable forum for discourse on the evolving challenges of our profession in the 21st century.

Let us celebrate and congratulate together the achievements of REML. May it continue its successful work for many more years to come!

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