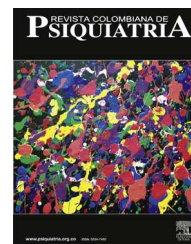


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Editorial

Crisis in Science and Technology in Colombia

Crisis en ciencia y tecnología en Colombia



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In the development of a country, its investment in science, technology and innovation is linked to the well-being and quality of life of its population. The results in science and technology are what provide solutions for community-inherent problems when relevant research is carried out and answers appropriate to the nation's difficulties are sought. Scientific criteria are needed to manage investments made coherently and optimally in the search for a better quality of life and to apply technological advances in the different aspects of life, health and productivity. These criteria also constitute the motors for innovation and for studying the impact of these programmes.

Based on these premises, governments decide to invest funds from their budget, aiming for a positive impact. Countries such as Japan and the United States devote a bit more than 5% of their gross domestic product (GDP) to research; in Latin America, Mexico and Brazil, the figure is almost 1%. Sadly, Colombia invests less than 0.1% of its GDP in various science and technology programmes (basic and applied research, training for teachers and doctors, etc.). What is even worse, every year the budget tends to shrink: for 2015 the government has allotted 287,457 million pesos for the Department of Science and Technology (Colciencias), 80,000 million less than in 2014 and 140,000 million less than in 2013 (source: Planning Office – Colciencias).

Adding to this problem, the Colombian government has decided that the regions are to invest a percentage of the economic resources from royalties that remain in the country, without implementing even a minimum system of control, regulation, monitoring and allotment. This will undoubtedly result in poor utilisation of these funds.

While this is going on, we researchers and scholars have to go to absurd lengths to attempt to obtain funding from these scant resources for research projects and, paradoxically, the government pressures us to produce results. In the recent National Conference of Psychiatry Residents, the future specialists were naively asked to consider the perspective of social responsibility that commits them to work meaningfully and rationally, in a constant search for solutions to the mental health problems that afflict our population.

We have to speak out in protest, in indignation. The powers that be in Colombia need to understand once and for all that education and research are the best way to social and productive development, for a more just and equitable society conducive to a real change towards peace.

This issue of the journal brings interesting original articles in various areas of psychiatry, without neglecting epistemological and paradigmatic reflections. We hope you will find it beneficial.

We'll see you in Cartagena!

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