

30 Years of the Colombian Review of Gastroenterology

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To understand the historical evolution of our journal, it is important that I tell you the conditions under which I received the Asociación Colombiana de Gastroenterología (ACG - Colombian Association of Gastroenterology) when I was elected president in Cali in 1985. I want you to understand that I was the second clinical gastroenterologist, the first was Alberto Albornoz Plata in 1959, to accede to that distinction. It was a big challenge considering the achievements of the most important surgeons in Colombia who had directed the Society for the previous 40 years.

The society did not have its own headquarters but rather worked in the offices of the Colombian Medical Federation with a desk and a shared secretary. It did not even have its own archives or any economic resources. There was only one book case with an incomplete collection of Selected Topics of Gastroenterology. The first thing we did was to reconstruct our historical memory by copying the missing volumes from copies provided by some members of our society. The archives had remained in the Military Hospital in the headquarters of the Colombian Association of Scientific Societies, where the ACG had functioned previously. The archives were recovered, and two investments were discovered. One was an unclaimed deposit in the Banco Popular that had been made by Jorge Archila Fajardo during his presidency. The other was a few capitalization certificates from the Banco Central Hipotecario that had been acquired by Eduardo Fonseca Ariza during his presidency. This was out of our reach until we were able to find documents in the name of the society through the collaboration of the several colleagues and were finally able to redeem them with interest. With this windfall, we were able to buy the headquarters on Calle 100 and Carrera 15 and to hire and pay for the new staff.

At the inauguration of the office, the book "Selected Issues" was given to former presidents. We revived the José Antonio Jácome Valderrama National Prize for Gastroenterology which had not been awarded for many years and granted it to Doctors Romero, Cepeda and Velandia of the National University for their work on *Irrigation of the Ascending Colon* and to Dr. Valbuena of the National Cancer Institute for his work on peroral prosthesis in the treatment of cancer of the esophagus and cardia.

These awards were presented at the convention in Bucaramanga in 1987 at which the new Colombian Congress of Digestive Diseases was adopted and at which we honored our founders: Hernando Velasquez Mejía, Luis Enrique Plata Esguerra, Ernesto Andrade Valderrama, Jose Antonio Jácome Valderrama, Jorge Lega Siccard and Juan Di Doménico Di Ruggiero.

At the request of Germán Liévano, Vice-President of the ACG, the Colombian Review of Gastroenterology (RCG) was created in 1986. He became the first editor during that year under the conditions just described.

At the end of my period Germán Liévano was elected to be the new president, and I became editor, with Germán Romero and Carlos Serrano as associate editors. When the financial agreement for printing with the Abbott Hospital Division ended, Mr. Hernán Tascón was appointed to be commercial director. He remained in that position until the year 2000. He guaranteed publication through the sale of advertising and by maintaining contact with Editora Guadalupe where the magazine was entered into computers and printed until 2000. In those days we had to go to the publishing company to supervise the work and correct the draft pages two or three times until they were done satisfactorily.

Initially, three societies, Gastroenterology, Endoscopy and Coloproctology, presented the RCG as their official organ. When the Hepatology society was founded, it became the fourth organization behind the magazine. The magazine has always had a totally autonomous administrative and financial structure.

Volume II No 1 published the Jácome prize-winning works of two Latin Americans, Doctors Reis Neto of Brazil and Ruiz Moreno of Mexico. Finally, it published a study by Dr. Jorge Lega which was very avant-garde in that time: *Computerized clinical history records in gastroenterology and abdominal surgery*. The magazine obtained license # 1940 of June 4, 1987 from the Ministry of Government after six issues had been issued.

As the result of our complete ignorance in editorial matters, we made more errors than correct editorial actions, and we only learned how to correct our errors over time from experience.

Errors

- We included only the surname of the authors, without completing them at the foot of the article, without including the place where the study was done, and without the date of entry or approval of publication.
- The authors by-lines were written by us without following international norms. There were no color photos published unless the author paid for them, and they were not included in the text but were printed on a separate page to reduce costs. There were no norms of bibliographic citation nor was the veracity of citations checked.
- The layout terminology was wrong.
- Keywords were not checked and compared with the MeSH.

Successes

- The magazine was adequately proportioned among original works, presentation of cases, updates and Latin American medicine.
- The abstracts were presented in English with translations done by me.
- We were able to place advertising on all three covers and back pages and on 14 inside pages
- The design of the first cover was our own original design which lasted 15 years

To complete the content, abstracts of ten international articles selected by the Editorial Committee were included.

The writing of editorials alternated between the associate editors who represented the four societies.

For the third year, the coat of arms of the ACG was redone, and, in October of that year, ISSN 0120-9957 was assigned.

In Volume X No. 1 in 1995, we adopted the bibliographic citation methodology of the Index Medicus and published the content of the Seminar-Workshop on Gastroenterology Education that had been conducted by the ACG. This became the basis of the current regulation of Postgraduate studies in the specialty.

In March 1995 Carlos Serrano assumed the position of editor. He added an Advisory Board and an Editorial Advisory Committee to the editorial team. The magazine began to publish editorials written by experts that comment on an original work in the same issue of the magazine. Volume X No. 3 officially welcomed the RCG to the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals, otherwise known as the Vancouver agreement, and adjusted the authors' bylines according to its recommendations.

Alberto Rodríguez was appointed editor with Vol. XII No 2 in April 1998. Until that time the selection and correction of articles were done by members of the Editorial Committee. In October 1998, Carlos Hernandez was hired as the magazine's copy editor.

In 2000 Fernando Sierra was named editor. As he noted it in his initial editorial, the RCG spent its childhood with me, its adolescence with Doctors Serrano and Rodríguez, and was about to being life as an adult. It had been 14 years of uninterrupted publication with an increasing number of new authors and readers reflecting the growth of the Association itself.

The cover page was changed to remove the coats of arms of the other societies but not their names. The internal regulations were abolished by a decision of the Board of Directors chaired by Jaime Campos. The autonomy of the

RCG was disappearing, and it was becoming a dependency of the ACG both administratively and financially.

The editorial system was changed. Ex Libris was contracted for both publication and marketing, with advice from Doctors. Fernand Chalem and Jaime Casasbuenas.

The layout was modernized, but the key words in the abstracts were erroneously deleted.

The magazine was included in Colciencias' Publindex with category C. The full text of the Vancouver Agreement was published. A chronicle, an international guest, an inter-institutional clinical case and an epidemiological corner were all added.

In my opinion, the most striking article ever published in the history of the magazine is that by Dr. Adolfo De Francisco titled *Fundamentals of the Doctor-Patient Relationship* which appeared in Vol. XV. Application of its clear and profound ideas is our best defense against the attacks of the Colombian legal system against doctors.

For Vol. XVII in 2002, Alejandro Orozco was chosen to become the editor. He appointed Luis Fernando Garzón as the manager and publicist of the magazine. Printing the review was entrusted to Ediciones Médicas Latinoamericanas. Four people were put in charge of copy editing, committees were expanded, and an International Consultative Committee was added.

In October of the same year the address Fernando Sierra returned to the position of editor and imposed the new regulations that had been proposed by Jaime Alvarado.

In October 2003 the new Editor Oscar Beltrán briefly renewed the agreement with Ex Libris until printing the magazine was finally entrusted to Distribuna. That contract is still in effect today. In March 2005, the review ascended to category B of Publindex, was indexed in Lilacs and Scielo for the first time, and began adhering to the regulations of those databases. This led to the formal start of our peer review process with peer reviewers appointed by the editor.

The next two editors were Mario Rey from 2005 to 2007 and Luis Fernando Pineda, who is currently president of the ACG, from 2007 to 2010. Both had taken part in the steering committees of the magazine and both continued the progressive editorial line of the magazine. Luis Fernando Pineda began the process of full-text translation into English by Mr. Theodore Adrian Zuur.

In September 2008, in my capacity as editor of *Acta Médica Colombiana*, I had the pleasure of attending the 7th Regional Congress of Health Sciences Information (CRICS) in Rio de Janeiro in the company of Fabio Gil who was an associate editor of RCG. The conclusions of this congress are published in both journals. They summarize the need for open access electronic formats, pro-



Figure 1. Dr. Jaime Alvarado B., editor of the Colombian Journal of Gastroenterology and Dr. Luis Fernando Pineda O., president of the Colombian Association of Gastroenterology before commemorating the 30 years of the magazine.

motion of visibility, and training of authors, referees, peer reviewers and editors. More than this, they promote interaction among related journals to increase quality and the number of and quality of citations of national and regional articles in indexes.

These goals have been achieved with some difficulty, but continuously, over the last few years.

In 2009 the RCG was indexed in EBSCO Publishing, and in 2015 it was indexed in Redalyc.

Rómulo Vargas was editor from 2010 to 2012 during which time Olga Mejia B. was appointed as the Editorial Assistant and placed in charge of the indexing process.

The first issue of volume XXVII in 2012 was edited by John Ospina. A significant number of specialists with masters degrees and doctorates from both Colombian and foreign universities were included on the magazine's Committees according to the requirements of Colciencias. With these changes the magazine moved up to category A2 in Publindex in 2011.

From April 2012 to the present, the editorial leadership of the RCG has been in the expert and successful hands of Jaime Alvarado. He not only has improved the quality of the publication in every sense but has successfully maintained the index category of the magazine in Colciencias' Publindex.

It is not easy to maintain the demanding new requirements Colciencias has added for the categorization of magazines in Publindex. The impact factor and the citation index must be so high that they will only be obtained by

affiliating magazines at very high cost to international data bases such as Elsevier and Scopus which are the basis for Colciencias' new regulations.

It is not fair to place our publications at the same level as international magazines. In this country we publish magazines for the sake of science, without resources, without remuneration, and with all kinds of technical obstacles. We are using the extra time that we have after practicing our profession and even sacrifice relations with our relatives in order to carry out the noble enterprises of education for the medical community, promotion of research and maintenance of scientific societies for the advancement of specialties for the benefit of the sick. It is good that they encourage us to improve, but to exclude us from Colombia

indexes will result in removal from other indexes and will scare off authors who seek to have their universities credit them for publication in category A and B magazines. The quality argument is a fallacy if it only takes into account the form and not the content. Both are important, and I think that we have been learning.

I want to congratulate all of you, because with the efforts of all of the editors, their work teams, the ACG Board of Directors, and the authors, we have achieved the miracle of making our magazine better and better for 30 years (Figures 1 And 2).

My thanks to Dr. Pineda for this celebration and an affectionate embrace of congratulations to Jaime Alvarado, our editor.



Figure 2. Meeting for the Commemoration of 30 years of the Colombian Journal of Gastroenterology organized by the ACG, November 10/2016. From left to right, some of the attendants: Luis Carlos Sabbagh, Fernando Sierra, Reynaldo Rincón, Raúl Cañadas, Carlos Serrano, Luis Fernando Pineda, Rómulo Vargas, Paulo Emilio Archila (RCG founder), Cecilia León de Archila, Albis Cecilia Hani, Mario Humberto Rey, William Otero, Javier Carrera, Germán Liévano (RCG founder) and Luciano Aponte.