Archivos Argentinos de Pediatria turns 85 years old

This month is our journal’s anniversary: 85 years have elapsed since its first publication in April 1930. Therefore, this a good time to reminisce some of the most remarkable aspects since its start, pay homage to its creators and to those who have made great efforts over these years to make Archivos Argentinos de Pediatria become what it is today.

Our first editorial started with “In fact, this journal is not a new organ of medical journalism, it is simply a vigorous shoot from the old trunk called Archivos Latino Americanos de Pediatria, which, for many years, contained most of the Argentine and Uruguayan pediatric bibliography.” This message, unique because of its honesty and modesty, clearly underscores the origin of our journal, and also states that it will follow the path of the organ that preceded it. Likewise, another paragraph honors those who conceived Archivos Latino Americanos de Pediatria, with this wording: “This homage would be ungrateful if we did not mention Gregorio Arioz Alfaro, M.D., and Luis Morquio, M.D., founders and directors....” Olinto de Oliveira, M.D., from Porto Alegre and Fernandes Figueiras, M.D., from Rio de Janeiro (Brasil) also took part at the dawn of this journal.

After 25 years, societies of pediatrics decided it was about time for each one to have its own journal and this led to the birth of our journal in Argentina as well as in Uruguay, Brazil and Chile.

In those days, the Sociedad Argentina de Pediatria was presided over by Professor Alfredo Casaubón, a leader in pediatrics nationwide and Head of the Department of Hospital de Niños de Buenos Aires; its vice president was Juan P. Garrahan, M.D. Our first director was María Teresa Vallino, M.D., from Hospital de Clinicas de Buenos Aires, a curiosity in those times when women’s presence in medicine was still scarce. She continued as director of Archivos Argentinos de Pediatria for the first seven years, and her work was truly praiseworthy and laid the foundations of our journal. The subsequent directors were amongst the most revered figures in Argentine pediatrics. It is worth noting some of those who had a great commitment and special devotion to our journal. María Teresa Vallino, M.D., was succeeded by Juan P. Garrahan, M.D., in 1937, who served as director for 10 years, a decade that brought much prestige to the our Journal. He was followed by Florencio Escardó, M.D., who contributed his wealth of cultural background and gift for writing to make our journal stand out. He was succeeded by Alfredo Larguía, M.D., (1949-1953) who was the director again between 1961 and 1965. In the eight years he was in charge, he maintained a great level of commitment, and his talent as a remarkable teacher and excellent human being was provided the journal with a wider vision, adapting to the changes that were taking place in the publications from other countries.

In the following years, outstanding pediatricians directed the Archivos Argentinos de Pediatria, including Juan Murtagh, M.D., (1965-1969) who became a tireless collaborator of the Sociedad Argentina de Pediatria (he facilitated the purchase of the house on Coronel Diaz street, which finally enabled us to have our own office more than 50 years after its foundation). Teodoro Puga, M.D., was also of great assistance in every position he held. He was director between 1975 and 1979, and in this period he finally regained the Society’s intellectual property. He was succeeded by Abel Bettinsoli, M.D., (1979-1981) who put all his effort and dedication to maintain the line of work of his predecessors.

In 1984, Carlos Gianantonio, M.D., took over the presidency of the Sociedad Argentina de Pediatria and asked me to be the editor of our journal, the Archivos Argentinos de Pediatria, which was then going through a dark period and whose quality had decreased in the context of a country where democracy was yet to return. I was greatly honoured that Dr. Gianantonio, our dear and always-present teacher, had entrusted me this task. With his support and that of the Steering Committee, as well as that of Gerda Rhades, marvelous and tireless collaborator, relentless improvements where made throughout his six years of management. Peer review was implemented for the first time, publications started being regularly published, and towards the end of the cycle, the first attempt was made to have the journal indexed in Medline. Between 1990 and 1997, Ramón Exeni, M.D., was in charge. During his administration, a formal request was submitted to the National Library of Medicine, and though it was not possible to be part of Medline, it set the basis for considering the steps to follow. In 1997, the Publication Council was created. Its director up to 2006, Teodoro Puga, M.D., made significant advancements in the journal and also in multiple publications. During this period, Archivos Argentinos de Pediatria was directed by Horacio Repetto, M.D., (1997-2000) and Carlos Wahren, M.D., (2000-2006), with the assistance of Carmen De Cunto, M.D. They continued laying
the most state-of-the-art foundations to further enhance the journal’s prestige. In March 2006, at the request of Mario Grenoville, M.D., then president of the Sociedad Argentina de Pediatría, I resumed as editor and author of the Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría two decades after my first experience. At the beginning, I had the excellent collaboration of Hebe González Pena, M.D., as Assistant Editor, although she was with us for less than one year, since her obligations and responsibilities as Head of Service were not compatible with the requirements of this task. She was replaced by Norma Rossato, M.D., who continues in her position and has been an exceptional collaborator and a true pillar along the entire editorial process. Together, we have established an excellent group of assistant editors, all committed to their positions, who really contribute to keep up the difficult task required by the journal.

I would like to highlight two major accomplishments: having been accepted by Medline in 2008, which was a fundamental historical landmark, and the progressive translation of articles into English since 2012. These two landmarks have allowed Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría to gain significance worldwide, its presence has advanced slowly but markedly, and at present it occupies a prominent place among pediatric journals edited in Spanish.

At present, the president of the Sociedad Argentina de Pediatría is Ángela Gentile, M.D., who together with the Steering Committee provide us with strong support, enabling us to face challenges, maintain our achievements and make improvements to attain new goals.

Thereby, we will be fulfilling the wishes of the pioneers who created this journal 85 years ago as the official organ of the Sociedad Argentina de Pediatría, and who today we are paying emotional homage to all those pediatricians who have shaped the present of the Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría.

José M. Ceriani Cernadas
Editor