

Difficulties, accomplishments and challenges for 2021

The beginning of a new year for *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría* brings upon us the reflections about the accomplishments and difficulties of 2020 and the challenges for 2021.

We should start by focusing on difficulties because they have been exceptionally serious. The COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives in a radical and abrupt manner, not only as health care professionals but in every respect.

As editors, we had to learn a new form of working: teleworking. The publication of *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría* could not be discontinued and, with the available information and communication technologies and greater or smaller levels of training on how to use them, we carried on.

This situation also displayed positive aspects worth noting. We have spent less time commuting to work and more time at home with our families, with more flexible working hours. This denotes the commitment of each of the editorial team members to their tasks. With no fixed hours, every member gave all the necessary time to keep up and maintain the editorial and scientific quality of *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría*.

Another positive aspect was how the Argentine Society of Pediatrics' task forces responded to the Steering Committee's request to enlighten, each from their specialty, the new theoretical knowledge about this pandemic and the practical issues related to professional practice. Before long, we received a large number of articles that, after an abbreviated editorial process, were published as the COVID-19 Supplement in October 2020.¹

We also had to face a problem common to all scientific journals: a sense of urgency to publish the news on the topic. The rigorous assessment of submitted articles should not be affected by the urgency of disseminating experiences. The quality of scientific knowledge is defined by its methodological bases. Without them, articles may be published without going through the filters and sometimes include misconceptions.² Undoubtedly, we took special care to accelerate the review process of those scientific-quality articles to make them available to the pediatrics community.

At *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría*, we pointed out the importance of the untoward side effects of how the pandemic is managed. A reduction

in well-child check-ups, delayed care for other conditions, postponed scheduled surgeries, irregular follow-up for children with chronic conditions, and a lower level of compliance with the immunization schedule.^{3,4}

The lack of school education is not restricted to missing classes. School is more than that; it implies socialization, support, and detection of health conditions or a family environment requiring attention. Virtual schooling led children to have longer screen times, with the consequent potential risks involved (sedentary lifestyle, eye disorders).⁵

Across all these problems, an unequal access to resources worsens the damage. Virtual schooling requires technology and family support, which not all children have. Community impoverishment due to the loss of jobs makes them even more vulnerable.⁶ We have developed better hygiene habits; in theory, this should lead to lower respiratory infection transmission, but not everyone has access to drinking water.

This is the difficult scenario where the pandemic is taking place. We were not fully prepared to fight it. Now come the challenges for 2021. What can we do to provide solutions from our positions?

We should provide easier access to the health system to those who need it. This requires management protocols aimed at protecting children and health care providers. We should improve telehealth consultations and develop forms of communication with our patients to provide follow-up to their needs. We should advise families about the need for a balance between the time children spend in front of a screen and their recreational, outdoors, and physical activity time. At a different level, it is also necessary to improve the quality of life of vulnerable communities.

Major events change our lives in a sudden and definite manner and test our resilience, our ability to adapt to new modalities, to have different goals, to live in uncertainty, but convinced that it is better to start building such future.

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