

Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría turns 85 years old

This month is our journal's anniversary: 85 years have elapsed since its first publication in April 1930. Therefore, this is 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 Pediatría* 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 Pediatría*, 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 Pediatría*, with this wording: "This homage would be ungrateful if we did not mention Gregorio Araújo 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 Pediatría* 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 Clínicas 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 Pediatría* 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 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 Pediatría*, including Juan Murtagh, M.D., (1965-1969) who became a tireless collaborator of the *Sociedad Argentina de Pediatría* (he facilitated the purchase of the house on Coronel Díaz 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 Pediatría* and asked me to be the editor of our journal, the *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría*, 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 were 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 Pediatría* 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

Scientific publication: How to handle rejection?

Every year, millions of manuscripts are submitted to thousands of scientific journals looking for publication. It is estimated that more than one million new scientific articles are published every year by the most important scientific journals, and a significant number of these are related to medicine.¹ Considering that journal acceptance rates are scarcely above 30% –and may be less than 5% for some–² rejection letters are sent to millions of authors every year. The way we, as authors, handle rejection, can probably make a difference.

In their excellent article, Venketasubramanian and Hennerici³ suggest that on receipt of notification of rejection one may initially experience a paralyzing shock, followed by the five stages of the Kübler-Ross grief cycle (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance). I believe that anger usually takes over the scenario (at least according to my own experience). Once this initial anger is overcome, it is necessary to analyze the notification of rejection.

If the manuscript was rejected due to administrative reasons, it means we failed to comply with the instructions for authors. It is our own fault, without exception.

If the manuscript was rejected by the journal editors (with no feedback from reviewers), either our manuscript was really poor (it stinks!) or, most likely, we sent it to the wrong journal. Although editors are not infallible, they have the obligation to go through the hundreds of articles they receive to select only those they believe will be the most interesting to their readers. Many good articles are rejected by certain journals but gladly welcomed by others. It is essential for us to assess which publication will take interest in our work.

Lastly, if the manuscript was rejected following a peer review, we should take other factors into consideration. In general, our first impression is that peer reviewers did not understand our work. This is the case many times, but we should also bear in mind that the fact that they did not understand is exclusively our fault. Our obligation is to write an article that can be understood by the general public, not just by our team, who has spent their last 15 years focused on this specific matter. In addition, even with limitations, editors usually select reviewers among renowned professionals

in each subject matter. Secondly, we usually feel like there is a conspiracy against us and that peer reviewers only want to harm us for the strangest reasons. We should bear in mind that editorial work is a burden on those who do it and they are usually driven by altruistic reasons. It is true that the peer review process is continuously discussed,⁴ but almost everyone agrees that, so far, it is the best option we have.

Once we contemplate that peer reviewers are not illiterate or hate us, we can then go over every item in their criticism and suggestions to correct our manuscript, either accepting their recommendations or backing up the elements that were not adequately stated in our first version.

If following rejection, we are allowed to send a new version, we will reply to each and every comment made by reviewers. If rejection is irreversible, we will submit our work to another journal, knowing that our article is now improved thanks to the work of editors and peer reviewers. It is not unusual that after three rejections, our article is accepted as is, with no amendments, and in record time by the fourth journal we had submitted it to. Our arrogance probably makes us believe that we have at last found a respectable group of scientists who appreciate our efforts and forget that our manuscript has been significantly improved by three previous reviews. ■

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