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EDITOR'S PAGE

Ibero-American Cardiovascular Journals. Proposals for Much-Needed Collaboration

Fernando Alfonso,[a] Katihurca Almonte,[b] Kaduo Arai,[c] Fernando Bacal,[d] José M. Drago Silva,[e] Javier Galeano Figueredo,[f] Eduardo Guarda,[g] Oswaldo Gutiérrez Sotelo,[h] Luis Guzmán,[i] Jorge León Galindo,[j] Bey Mario Lombana,[k] Manlio F. Márquez,[l] Francisco Luis Moreno Martínez,[m] José Navarro Robles,[n] Fausto Pinto,[o] Carlos Romero,[p] Carlos D. Tajer,[q] Hugo Villarroel,[r] and Fernando S. Wyss Quintana[s]

[a]Editor Jefe, *Revista Española de Cardiología,* Madrid, Spain
[b]Editora Jefe, *Archivos Dominicanos de Cardiología,* Santo Domingo, República Dominicana
[c]Editor Jefe, *Avances Cardiológicos,* Caracas, Venezuela
[d]Editor Jefe, *Arquivos Brasileiros de Cardiologia,*Río de Janeiro, Brazil
[e]Editor Jefe, *Revista Peruana de Cardiología,* Lima, Perú
[f]Editor Jefe, *Revista Paraguaya de Cardiología,* Asunción, Paraguay
[g]Editor Jefe, *Revista Chilena de Cardiología,* Santiago de Chile, Chile
[h]Editor Jefe, *Revista Costarricense de Cardiología,* San José, Costa Rica
[i]Editor Jefe, *Revista de la Federación Argentina de Cardiología,* Buenos Aires. Argentina
[j]Editor Jefe, *Revista Colombiana de Cardiología,* Bogotá, Colombia
[k]Editor Jefe, *Revista de Cardiología, Revista Panameña de Cardiología,* Panamá
[l]Editor Jefe, *Archivos de Cardiología de Mexico,* México DF, Mexico
[m]Editor Jefe, *CorSalud,* La Habana, Cuba
[n]Editor Jefe, *Revista Mexicana de Cardiología,* Mexico DF, México
[o]Editor Jefe, *Revista Portuguesa de Cardiologia,* Lisboa, Portugal
[p]Editor Jefe, *Revista Uruguaya de Cardiología,* Montevideo, Uruguay
[q]Editor Jefe, *Revista Argentina de Cardiología,* Buenos Aires, Argentina
[r]Editor Jefe*, *Revista de la Asociación Salvadoreña de Cardiología,* San Salvador, El Salvador
[s]Editor Jefe, *Revista de la Asociación Guatemalteca de Cardiología,* Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

*The *Revista de la Asociación Salvadoreña de Cardiología* was published from 2003 to 2005.

The Ibero-American scientific societies of cardiology have always maintained close contact and actively collaborated on different scientific, academic and social initiatives. This most-special relationship is based on deep, common cultural roots that constitute our identity and bind us together and is best exemplified by the languages we share: Spanish and Portuguese. However, our roots are not solely bound to the sociocultural context—they transcend this, reaching academic, university, and scientific spheres where we share a relatively uniform vision and challenges. The Ibero-American societies of cardiology have traditionally maintained strong links and teaching agreements, at under- and postgraduate levels, and the different national conferences of cardiology have always been enriched by the participation of numerous Ibero-American cardiologists from other countries. We need only recall the many Spanish-Portuguese conferences of cardiology or meetings of the Interamerican Society of Cardiology, the Central American Society of Cardiology, and the Caribbean Cardiac Society.

The biomedical journals constitute one of the most important aspects of the scientific societies.[1-13] The fundamental objective of these journals is to publish scientific articles of the highest possible quality, attain excellence in their editorial process, and achieve the greatest dissemination possible for their contents. In this way, they can build greater international prestige and recognition and make themselves more attractive to research groups and their own readers. Fundamentally, the biomedical journals publish 2 types of article: original research articles—where investigators share and disseminate findings, essentially in order to push forward the frontiers of knowledge—and review articles—intended to provide top-quality, continuing medical training.

The national Ibero-American cardiovascular journals (IACVJ) consist of all the official cardiovascular journals of the different national societies of cardiology in Latin America, Spain, and Portugal. Although they may seem highly heterogeneous,[1-13] these publications clearly share fundamental elements (among others, the languages), have similar aspirations, and

Correspondence: *Revista Española de Cardiología*.
Sociedad Española de Cardiología.
Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 5-7. 28028 Madrid. España.
E-mail: rec@revespcardiol.org

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face similar editorial challenges in an ever more competitive and globalized scientific world. To date, occasional collaboration between IACVJ has been merely anecdotal with no formal or institutional agreements of any kind.[14,15] However, it seems obvious that we should collaborate closely to successfully improve our visibility, disseminate contents, and design editorial strategies of mutual interest.

With this objective in mind, the "I Meeting of Ibero-American Cardiovascular Journal Editors" was organized under the auspices of the *Revista Española de Cardiología* and took place on March 30, 2009 in Orlando (Florida, USA) during the American College of Cardiology Conference. All IACVJ editors-in-chief were invited to participate. Prior to the event, a detailed, structured questionnaire (40 sections) was designed and sent to each of the individuals responsible for a journal so they could complete it with their principle editorial and bibliometric data.

The present document describes the results of the aforementioned meeting, presents the most important IACVJ editorial data, reports the proposals and editorial initiatives discussed at the meeting, and summarizes the agreements reached.

I Meeting of Ibero-American Cardiovascular Journal Editors

All IACVJ editors-in-chief were invited to the meeting. Those who were unable to attend were represented by their associate editors or the president or secretary-general of their respective national societies.

Twenty-two official representatives of 17 IACVJ from 16 countries attended the meeting. After a review of the meeting's fundamental objectives, each editor made a formal presentation of their journal. Later, all the information needed to construct a joint database was prepared and correct completion of the abovementioned structured questionnaire was reviewed.

Finally, a fruitful debate took place on a range of editorial and scientific issues of mutual interest. Initially, we dealt with topics raised during the presentations (with constructive suggestions for improvements made by several editors). Later, formal proposals were made for their consideration and debate. Among the most important of these was the suggestion we should establish official links between the national societies of cardiology in order to share common editorial resources. We thought it appropriate to develop stable agreements favoring close editorial collaboration between geographically close societies or with societies that have no official journal.

Similarly, the issue of the lack of a research tradition in many Latin-American countries was raised. Dr Ignacio Chávez's oft-quoted, deeply-held conviction that "our only possible redemption in the scientific terrain lies in producing" was highlighted for its current validity in Mexico. We were reminded that, in their respective countries, the editors are at least partly responsible for encouraging greater recognition of the merits of research when individuals' curricula are evaluated for them to obtain professional or academic recognition. Without doubt, initiatives like these would stimulate research and publication among the new generations of Ibero-American cardiologists. The importance of facilitating a transition towards electronic publications–ideally with open access–was stressed,[16] as were the challenges this entails, including measures needed to guarantee preservation of contents. Online editions represent an urgent challenge; they bring with them lower edition costs and, above all, improved international diffusion of IACVJ. Moreover they could help overcome problems like the lack of indexization, delays in edition, and limited print-runs, that affect some IACVJ. Recognized, well-accepted Ibero-American repositories like the Sistema Latindex and the SciELO Project do exist.[17,18] They are based on new information and communication technology and record, evaluate and give access to full-text versions of the journals. In Spain, the Índice Médico Español database[19] and in Mexico, the Artemisa database,[20] constitute interesting initiatives with similar objectives. Undoubtedly, the hegemony of English as the lingua franca of the scientific world cannot be questioned but, should we not be able to measure in some way or other our influence on knowledge and the real scientific impact of what we produce?[21,23]

Moreover, we were reminded how important it is that editors should be vigilant in overseeing their national societies to ensure they guarantee the priority of the official over other publications, whether of different sub-specialties or specific geographic areas, that in specific circumstances could compete for sponsorship with the official publications. Where other publications exist, it was suggested close coordination was essential to ensure they never compete with the general interests of the official journal. This issue proves especially relevant in times like the present, when widespread economic crisis limits publishing budgets. We also debated the issue of which national cardiovascular journals should receive maximum priority to obtain official aid for research and development.[24] The IACVJ should aspire to achieving and maintaining the highest

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standards of editorial quality. This long-term process is delicate, laborious and, above all, expensive. So, we cannot fail to be surprised at the lack of state aid that, if forthcoming, would guarantee it. We need to gain the support of the authorities involved in scientific-technological planning and in the teaching and research institutions so as to favor the development of measures of quality and achieve greater recognition for the IACVJ.[21,22] The editors are responsible for transmitting to the relevant institutions the importance of maintaining publications of excellence as a key element to permit research to develop adequately in each country.[21,22] Unfortunately, institutional changes in some Latin American national societies have conditioned changes in budgets and in the frequency with which scientific publications appear; occasionally, these factors have had highly negative consequence in international appreciation of journal quality. Similarly, although in some Ibero-American countries the publication in national journals is duly encouraged and specifically recognized—both in academic and university assessment processes and in scientific and technological institutions—paradoxical situations remain, in which these publications are undervalued and/or discriminated against.[21] If we do not improve the quality of our journals we cannot complain that nationally-generated research can only reach a wider readership through "foreign" publications. This forces us to renounce both our national scientific heritage and the substantial intellectual and economic benefits it accrues.[24] Therefore, we obviously need to invest to improve the quality, dissemination and international prestige of our journals and ensure that, in the last instance, the final product of research is published in IACVJ that have attained excellence. Moreover, locally-generated research is absolutely essential both to guarantee advances in our knowledge and because this information is a faithful reflection of specific social and healthcare needs and provides responses to problems that cannot be transferred in from other contexts. Some forms of cardiovascular disease that predominantly affect Latin-American countries are paradigmatic examples of this.[25,26] We cannot accept that all the information required for decision-making should systematically come from solutions adapted from research conducted in contexts far from the reality of our countries. Moreover, we cannot accept the intellectual claudication derived from always waiting for "others" to do the research. Once again, editors have to accept their fundamental role in guaranteeing adequate curricular recognition of research studies published in IACVJ.

Finally, we highlighted the editors' function in favoring the development of evidence-based medicine and disseminating the scientific societies' clinical practice guidelines.[4,27,28]

The participants coincided in considering the meeting reported here a success and a historic event, both for being the first event of its kind and for the interest and transcendence of the issues debated.

General Editorial Data

The information presented at the meeting and the analysis of the structured questionnaire enabled us to construct a common database with information available through all the IACVJ. Surprising as it may seem, prior to the event we did not even know the exact number or correct addresses of all the different IACVJ. The most important IACVJ editorial data is summarized in Table and the URL addresses are in Appendix. Currently there are 17 IACVJ. Seven societies do not publish a journal at present; 3 of these did previously do so. The Sociedad Puertorriqueña reported its intention to launch a new journal and the Sociedad Cubana de Cardiología will also launch a new national publication (*CorSalud*) this year, in electronic format only. Two countries (Argentina and Mexico) have 2 different, official societies of cardiology and each of these publishes its own scientific journal.

The first journal published was *Archivos de Cardiología de México,* founded in 1930, and the most recent launch was of the *Revista de la Sociedad Paraguaya de Cardiología* in 2003. Four journals have been in existence for over 50 years and 12 for over 20. All the journals analyzed have a full-text paper edition and 15 have an electronic version too (all of these have free full-text access). Fourteen journals accept for consideration manuscript submitted in electronic format; 6 have incorporated a complete electronic manuscript management system. Four journals have their own web site and the remaining 11 are located on the respective national society's web site. Paper edition print runs range from 11 000 (*Arquivos Brasileiros de Cardiologia*) to 400 (mean, 2494; median, 1500). Only 3 journals are monthly and 5 publish more than 4 issues a year. Fifteen journals publish all article abstracts in English. Sixteen journals are published in Spanish (5 of them are also available in English in full text) and 2, in Portuguese (*Revista Portuguesa de Cardiologia* translates full-text contents into English in the same paper edition; *Arquivos Brasileiros de Cardiologia,* translates into both Spanish and English in their electronic edition). All journals publish original articles and 15 use a peer review system. Ten publications edit self-financing supplements[29] separate from the

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TABLE. **Bibliometrics Database of The Oficials Cardiovascular Journals of the Ibero-American National**

Country Society Journal Editor-in-Chief	Founded	Print Run	Issues/ Year	Full-Text Electronic Edition	Online Receipt of Manuscripts	Electronic Manuscript Management System	Independent Website	Languages of Publication	Abstracts in English	Peer Review	Indexed in	Committee of Scientific Journal Editors Recommendations	Early Online	Supplements, Issues/Year
Argentina Sociedad Argentina de Cardiología *Revista Argentina de Cardiología* Carlos D. Tajer	1934	3500	6	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES, EN	Yes	Yes	Doaj, Latindex, LILACS, SciELO	Yes	No	3
Argentina Federación Argentina de Cardiología *Revista de la Federación Argentina de Cardiología* Luis Guzmán	1972	5000	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	ES	Yes	Yes	Index Medicus Latinoamericano, SIIC DATABASE	Yes	Yes	1-2
Brazil Sociedade Brasileira de Cardiologia *Arquivos Brasileiros de Cardiologia* Fernando Bacal	1948	11 000	12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ES, EN, PT	Yes	Yes	EMBASE, ISI, Latindex, LILACS, MEDLINE, NML, SciELO, SCOPUS	Yes	No	6
Chile Sociedad Chilena de Cardiología y Cirugía Cardiovascular *Revista Chilena de Cardiología* Eduardo Guarda	1982	1000	4	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES, EN	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Colombia Sociedad Colombiana de Cardiología y Cirugía Cardiovascular *Revista Colombiana de Cardiología* Jorge León Galindo	1985	2000	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	ES	Yes	Yes	LICOCS, LILACS, PUBLINDEX, SciELO	Yes	No	4
Costa Rica Sociedad Costarricense de Cardiología *Revista Costarricense de Cardiología* Oswaldo Gutiérrez Sotelo	1999	700	2	Yes	No	No	No	ES	Yes	No	Latindex, SciELO	No	No	No
República Dominicana Sociedad Dominicana de Cardiología *Archivos Dominicanos de Cardiología* Katihurca Almonte	1966	500	2	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Spain Sociedad Española de Cardiología *Revista Española de Cardiología* Fernando Alfonso	1947	5300	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ES, EN	Yes	Yes	EMBASE/ Excerpta Medica, Index Medicus, Journal Citation Reports, Latindex, MEDLINE, SCOPUS	Yes	Yes	6
Guatemala Asociación Guatemalteca de Cardiología *Revista de la Asociación Guatemalteca de Cardiología* Fernando S. Wyss Quintana	1988	1000	2	No	Yes	No	No	ES	No	Yes	—	Yes	No	No

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TABLE. **Bibliometrics Database of The Oficials Cardiovascular Journals of the Ibero-American National** *(continuation)*

Country Society Journal Editor-in-Chief	Founded	Print Run	Issues/ Year	Full-Text Electronic Edition	Online Receipt of Manuscripts	Electronic Manuscript Management System	Independent Website	Languages of Publication	Abstracts in English	Peer Review	Indexed in	Committee of Scientific Journal Editors Recommendations	Early Online	Supplements, Issues/Year
Mexico Sociedad Mexicana de Cardiología *Archivos de Cardiología de México* Manlio F. Márquez	1930	1800	4	Yes	No	No	Yes	ES, EN[a]	Yes	Yes	Artemisa, Conacyt, EMBASE/Excerpta Medica, Index Medicus Latinoamericano, Latindex, MEDLINE, SCOPUS	Yes	No	2-4
Mexico Asociación Nacional de Cardiólogos de México *Revista Mexicana de Cardiología* José Navarro Robles	1990	2000	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	ES, EN	Yes	Yes	Artemisa, CICH-UNAM, Conacyt, Latindex, MEDLINE	Yes	No	1
Panama Sociedad Pañameña de Cardiología *Revista Panameña de Cardiología* Bey Mario Lombana	1987	1500	2	No	No	No	No	ES	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Paraguay Sociedad Paraguaya de Cardiología *Revista de la Sociedad Paraguaya de Cardiología* Javier Galeano Figueredo	2003	400	3	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES	Yes	Yes	BIREME, BVS-PY, LILACS	Yes	No	No
Peru Sociedad Peruana de Cardiología *Revista Peruana de Cardiología* José M. Drago Silva	1993	1000	3	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	No	0-1[b]
Portugal Sociedade Portuguesa de Cardiologia *Revista Portuguesa de Cardiologia* Fausto Pinto	1982	3500	11	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	EN, PT	Yes	Yes	Index Copernicus, MEDLINE	Yes	No	1
Uruguay Sociedad Uruguaya de Cardiolología *Revista Uruguaya de Cardiología* Carlos Romero	1986	1000	3	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES	Yes	Yes	Latindex, SciELO	Yes	Yes	No
Venezuela Sociedad Venezolana de Cardiología *Avances Cardiológicos* Kaduo Arai	1977	1200	4	Yes	Yes	No	No	ES	Yes	Yes	LILACS, LIVECS	Yes	Yes	1

EN indicates English; ES, Spanish; PT, Portuguese.
[a]Articles are published in English when the manuscripts submitted are in English.
[b]Biannual supplement.
Data presented in alphabetical order by country

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regular issues (mean, 2.4 supplements/year). Fifteen journals include color illustrations and 10 do so at no additional cost to authors. Sixteen publications refer in their instructions for authors to the need to follow the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors uniform requirements.[30-36] With reference to international bibliometric databases, 7 journals are included in Latindex, 5 in SciELO, and 5 in MEDLINE (*Revista Portuguesa de Cardiologia, Arquivos Brasileiros de Cardiologia, Archivos Mexicanos de Cardiología, Revista Mexicana de Cardiología,* and *Revista Española de Cardiología*). Only 1 journal (*Revista Española de Cardiología*) has obtained an impact factor (Thomson ISI) although it is highly likely that another will soon be incorporated into this popular bibliometric index.

Proposals for Editorial Collaboration

1. To establish preferential direct electronic links connecting IACVJ websites

Our objective is to make it easier for researchers to send manuscripts to IACVJ. The characteristics, topics, bibliometric indices and manuscript acceptance rates differ between the IACVJ. These data are assessed by researchers when sending manuscripts for publication. Moreover, while some journals receive more manuscripts for consideration than they can publish, others clearly need original articles. An open, multidirectional flow of information would be much appreciated by potential authors and would benefit all IACVJ.

2. To jointly write and simultaneously publish a document in all IACVJ

The data, agreements and proposals presented in the present article have been reviewed and finally accepted by all the editors-in-chief who are signatories to this document.

3. To maintain a common database describing the most important editorial and bibliometric characteristics of the IACVJ

The editors of the different IACVJ commit themselves to annually updating this electronic database.

4. To establish an "Ibero-American Editors Forum"

The fundamental objectives of this forum would be to facilitate debate on editorial issues of mutual interest, to monitor the evolution of the proposals presented here, and periodically hold joint editorial meetings.

5. To implement the basic editorial norms of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (previously known as the Vancouver group) in the IACVJ30-36

These norms establish widely-accepted and validated uniform requirements intended to improve the quality of the scientific and editorial process. They cover many technical and formal issues but, more and more, they emphasize the need to establish ethical norms of activity (authors, reviewers and editors) to preserve the credibility of the scientific process.[30-36] Adopting these general norms leaves the independent editorial policy of each journal unaffected.

6. To collaborate and evaluate the editorial proposals generated by other international associations of editors

a) General journals: International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (World Association of Medical Editors [WAME]) and the Council of Science Editors.[37,38]

b) Cardiovascular journals: Heart Editors Action Round Table (HEART group) and the European Club of Cardiovascular Editors (ESC Editor's Club).[39,40]

7. To help disseminate the scientific contents generated in IACVJ as widely as possible

Currently, many of our journals are not included in the most prestigious international bibliometric databases. At least in part, this is because some of these databases tend to favor English-language publications.[21,22,41-45] Thus, a vicious circle is generated — which it is difficult to break out of— leading to IACVJ original articles being cited much less often and, what is even worse, IACVJ citations not being evaluated. In fact, many studies widely quoted in IACVJ—ie studies with substantial scientific repercussions—are underrepresented in international index evaluations because these citations are simply not computed. This problem, together with the negative bias on the part of many researchers to studies in languages other than English added to US researchers' less-frequent citation of European and Latin-American studies, helps explain the poor dissemination and evaluation of our scientific articles.[21,22,42,43]

Consequently, we IACVJ editors commit ourselves to favoring the dissemination and citation of original scientific studies exclusively on the basis of their scientific rigor and content.

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We also commit ourselves to collaborating to ensure that the greatest possible number of our journals can be made available via the most prestigious repositories and international databases.

Conclusions

The IACVJ are heterogeneous but have very important similarities. Above all, they face common challenges that they take on together in a more and more competitive and globalized scientific world. The IACVJ editors are convinced the initiatives we describe in the present article will help increase collaboration between our journals and further stimulate relations between our respective national societies. These proposals are intended to increase the dissemination, credibility and international prestige of all our publications.

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APPENDIX. **Ibero-American National Societies' Official Cardiovascular Journal URLs**

Journal	URL
Revista Argentina de Cardiología	http://revista.sac.com.ar/
Revista de la Federación Argentina de Cardiología	http://www.fac.org.ar
Arquivos Brasileiros de Cardiologia	http://www.arquivosonline.com.br
Revista Chilena de Cardiología	http://www.sochicar.cl
Revista Colombiana de Cardiología	http://www.scc.org.co
Revista Costarricense de Cardiología	http://www.acc.co.cr
Archivos Dominicanos de Cardiología	http://www.sodocardio.org
Revista Española de Cardiología	http://www.revespcardiol.org
Revista de la Asociación Guatemalteca de Cardiología	http://www.agcardio.org
Archivos de Cardiología de México	http://www.medigraphic.com/archivoscardiologia/index.htm y www.elsevier.com.mx
Revista Mexicana de Cardiología	http://www.medigraphic.com/revmexcardiol/
Revista de la Sociedad Paraguaya de Cardiología	http://www.spc.org.py/v2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=62
Revista Peruana de Cardiología	http://www.sopecard.org
Revista Portuguesa de Cardiologia	http://www.spc.pt
Revista Uruguaya de Cardiología	http://www.suc.org.uy
Avances Cardiológicos	http://www.svcardiologia.org/svc/svciavancescardiologicosprincipal.php