

THE WORDS OF PROF. DR. DOMINGO M. BRAILE

A huge step to transform a dream of Latin-American cardiovascular surgeons into reality will be made in this month of January in Miami, where the inclusion of the Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery as an official organ of the Latin-American Society of Cardiothoracic Surgery will be discussed. The intention is that our journal, The Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery (BJCVS), will be the official periodic of the society and start to publish articles in Spanish, as well as start to be distributed in all the countries of the continent. This will exponentially increase its circulation to around ten thousand copies.

The best way to adapt the publication without prejudicing one or the other language is still being discussed. The theme will be dealt with in a special meeting on 30th January. However, we stress that our journal will continue with its autonomy, achieved over the last 18 years of uninterrupted publications. The manuscripts of our colleagues from other nations should be submitted to the same rules and demands as Brazilian authors.

We hope only to gain from this union, which will strengthen our society, enabling greater recognition in the international community of works performed in the Southern Hemisphere.

This fact will gain importance at a time in which financial sustainability of scientific publications have generated debates in the academic world, as obtaining resources becomes more and more arduous for several reasons. Two blatant examples are the difficulty to obtain resources from research development institutions, both governmental and private, and the redirecting of budgets to sectors considered as being of greater priority.

Owing to rising costs, many periodicals migrated to the Internet deciding to cease with the paper copy, continuing active only as

electronic medium. To increase the income, they close their content to the general public, making it available only to subscribers. This frequently generates a prohibitive cost for people who work with science, or even for interested lay-people, especially in the so-called "Third World". This is controversial, as, on one side, it gives indispensable leeway to a determined publication, on the other, restricts the spread of knowledge.

One alternative solution has been to maintain free access to the complete contents of the articles, but charging the authors a publication fee. This procedure has been gaining adherents, including amongst Brazilian publications, and promises to cause many debates. This has even been the theme of a report published on 16th November 2003 in the "Mais!" supplement of Folha de São Paulo, one of the most important daily newspapers in Brazil. In the report, the importance of PloS (Public Library of Science), available at the site www.plos.org allowing free access to articles was stressed.

Something very different happened in Brazil, with the presence of our Electronic Library, Scielo. Thanks to the effort of many and specifically to the financial resources for development and to Professor Abel Packer, the authors can publish their articles without costs and the readers all over the planet have access to nearly 200 periodicals with complete text and without charge. Among them are the BJCVS, whose electronic version (www.scielo.br/rbccv) is published in English, so that a greater audience can be reached.

The PloS charges a US\$ 1,500 "circulation fee" for those who wish to publish their works. Even so, specialists understand that this is an acceptable option. The report in the newspaper cites that research funding institutions such as the Welcome Trust in England and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in the USA, announced

that they would charge circulation fees of up to US\$3 thousand for works financed by them.

The BJCVS, as a member of Scielo, will continue giving free access to all interested parties. Its team, however, together with the board of directors of the Brazilian Society of Cardiovascular Surgery (BSCVS) will work hard to obtain further resources to maintain its excellent standards, enabling it to be classified as "Qualis A". Recently, we had an unpleasant piece of news, represented by a negative request of CNPq in respect to giving us the traditional help towards the costs of editing and printing as happened in past years. But we will continue to remain in contact with them and with other research support institutions looking for options that will allow the receipt of more resources.

We are, also, finishing negotiations relating the inclusion of the BJCVS in Medline. A report has been being carefully prepared, with the help of experienced librarians, nourishing optimism in respect to acceptance of our journal in this important organization, which will give us more national and international prestige.

We have the honor of publishing in this issue, five extremely eulogistic letters to the editor that should fill us all with pride. Two come from the USA, written by Dr Gerald Bucklberg and Tomas Salerno, making extremely positive comments about Brazilian cardiovascular surgeons.

A third letter originated in Germany. In it, the Brazilian resident doctor, Rafael Otto Schneidewind narrates the enthusiasm of Professor Herbert Otto Vetter from Herzzentrum Wuppertal, for Brazilian heart surgery. The fourth was written by Marcelo Matos Cascudo, from Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, a member of the deliberative counsel of the BSCVS. He stressed the importance of cardiovascular surgery in the Brazilian context and made demands for more attention to the specialty on the part of the government and society in general. Finally in the fifth letter, the editor Ulisses Croti communicates news about the creation of the Department of Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery (DPCVS), approved by the directors of the BSCVS on 20th November 2003.

We have the pleasure of sharing these words, which give us so much encouragement, with our honorable colleagues.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all who collaborated with the BJCVS in 2003 - authors, peer reviewers, members of the editorial board, board of directors of the SBCCV -, without whom our work would have been impossible and we wish all the year of 2004 full of achievements.

Receive my highest regards

Domingo Braile - Editor BJCVS