

2011 Presidency Opening Speech

To assume leadership of the Sociedad Argentina de Cardiología is a really honorable task, but also of great responsibility. Honorable, because of the rich history of the Society in its 73 years of life, where carving figures as Blas Moia, Braun Menéndez, Cossio, Taquini, Perosio and Bertolasi, among others, passed and, huge responsibility to maintain and enhance the prestige, influence and contributions of our Society, entity that has a complexity in its structure given by the different areas of the Main Office and 37 Regional Districts, each of them with its particular problems that must be addressed promptly.

In the previous weeks in which I reflected on what words directed you at this important moment in my personal life, I found that much had been said by my predecessors in office. In that sense, the increasing development of our Society despite the external vicissitudes that it has had to live in its 73 years was the most concrete proof that the vision of my predecessors and their objectives could be crystallized with enough completeness over the years. No lesser task that I have, that of being to measure up to those who have preceded me in office, that is why to honor and appreciate it, will be much more important to me than the honor to exercise it, by the way it is not lesser.

When I joined this Society, back in 1981, presenting my first scientific studies in the Argentine Congress of Cardiology, I did it, as many of us, because it should be so, without many more questions. Achieving excellence in cardiology training at that time included not only to make a residency of the specialty in a recognized place, but to achieve the rank of Full Member of the SAC, which jointed the senior scientific, association hierarchy and ethical values that characterize our institution.

Unfortunately, this has changed dramatically and today many young cardiologists hesitate about joining a scientific society with arguments such as the time available, and tangible yield that this may entail. This can have several causes, such as professional impairment evidenced by the impoverishment of the medical act, which requires much more time to devote to the health care program to maintain an income increasingly meager; and the lack of recognition of professional training and updating that undermines the willingness and effort required for development of a specialty of increasing complexity. This is a problem of medicine in general in the world, aggravated in our country for the number of professionals superior than the national requirements, thus affecting the impairment of the professional activity.

For this, our Society, is aware of this situation, has long been addressed it by proposing what are the

appropriate conditions for the accurate achievement of medical act (duration and therefore payment) in order to restore the quality of doctor-patient relationship and therefore it does not become a mere service to a customer. It is a long and arduous road, but we will not rest and we will persist in this point, both in this administration that starts as successive ones, given that it is an unavoidable problem for our Society, even although it has scientific objectives, nowadays, to achieve them fully, you should have a hierarchical cardiology profession against what actually undermine health systems in force that lead to the impoverishment of the doctor-patient relationship.

On the other hand, we will stimulate from all areas of the Society the approach of new cardiologists by delivering tangible benefits and incentives such as progress in membership through work and participation within society. Also, the quality of the SAC membership will be upgraded by obtaining services, for example, those derivative of the enrichment of the contents of our website with access to partners and the output of our Society to the medical community in events such as SAC in Public Hospital, among others. This is also a long way, but we will go by it without pause since its effects will not be immediate, but will surely be evident in the mid-term.

A brief reference to plans for the main areas of the SAC:

- Regional Districts: strengthening the incorporation of new members and regionalizing activities in order to provide better educational opportunities by avoiding overlapping of activities that becomes costly and inefficient the operative in the districts. Moreover, this regionalization will increase local participation in the activities in the districts.
- Teaching Area: to continue developing the program UBA SAC. To focus on the present administration a new SAC accreditation of residences throughout the country as well as deepen the relationship with the National Ministry of Health as it pertains to assessments of residences that are postulated to establish before the Ministry.
- Research Area: to continue with existing programs (registers, courses of research methods) and develop (in fact, return to) a project of SAC's scholarship for clinical research as a first step towards the further development of a more ambitious plan of scholarships to encourage research in general (both clinical and basic) of young cardiologists in their workplaces.
- PROSAC: to increase the number of subscribers from 1,000 to 1,500 by working in the District and with proposals of diffusion among cardiologists and related specialties. Evaluating the possibility of

agreements with societies from neighboring countries to provide the program on favorable terms and the granting of scholarships for doctors in general and cardiologists in training.

- Instructional Resource Area: to continue and promote the development of new technologies for distance education that enable to (for example, with the use of the Moodle platform) provide through our website courses, conferences, controversies, among others, destined to our partners.

- Health Policy: even though the objective of our Society is not to make health policy because it corresponds to the State, on the other hand, it is our concern provide content, information and proposals on issues of our specialty that can be used to design specific policies for diagnosis and treatment of different cardiologic conditions. This year we worked hard to promote links with the relevant authorities both nationally and the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and there are ongoing projects such as the treatment in the early hours of myocardial infarction.

- International Relationship will not be neglected given the positioning of our Society in the international arena evidenced by extensive dealings with the American College of Cardiology, this year with the American Heart Association and the European Society of Cardiology. Our Society was received by the directors of those Societies in prolonged and productive audiences that may result in cooperative programs, internships for SAC members, joint meetings, among others. It has strengthened the relationship with the Brazilian Society of Cardiology and this will continue with a strategic association that hierarchizes cardiology in our region. A prominent role in these achievements is due to the creation of the International Area Relations of the SAC, an advisory body of the Board of Directors specifically devoted to this issue.

- It will tend the work in conjunction with the Argentine Cardiologic Foundation, our communal arm, since this will result in greater and more consistent position of our Institutions which must be seen in the community as a unit of work and objectives.

- La Revista Argentina de Cardiología, our national media, will undoubtedly continue with the growth of its scientific quality and will be supported all efforts to achieve the indexing, worthy snap to the scientific hierarchy of its content. There are opportunities to advance on partnership agreement with first-line editorials that facilitate this process and this will be strongly supported.

In summary, the main points that we propose, which obviously will not be the only ones, are focused on:

1. Encourage and increase the participation from all the SAC's areas.
2. Build a SAC's scholarship program to promote

research of young cardiologists.

3. Enhance SAC's educational products through the use of modern computer systems.

4. Strengthen our presence in the spheres of government with our contribution of knowledge to aid design of public health policies of our specialty.

5. Strengthen our international relations from our region to the rest of the world.

Finally, I wish to express some acknowledgement. I doubted to do it, since it is something highly personal and may not be relevant to the audience, but it comes from a deep personal feeling and I will not overlook this important occasion:

First, those who trusted me to this position, I sincerely hope not to disappoint the trust and contribute to association progress as I tried to do since all the positions I have covered in the SAC.

To our President, Hector Maisuls, for allowing me to enjoy his friendship, meet a person of not much usual qualities and have learned of his views and approaches of the diverse discussed issues.

To my partners in the daily work at the Clinicas Bazterrica and Santa Isabel, Drs. Adrián Charask and Enrique Fairman, for the cooperation and understanding by the time demanded by the association job.

To Dr. Victor Mauro, also a partner in the daily work, friend and brother in life. for his unwavering support and to his beautiful family, which is partly mine too, especially Micaela, my goddaughter, and Rocco.

To my teacher in cardiology, Carlos Bertolasi. Each day that passes I value more the good fortune to have known him and shared many moments of my professional life at the Hospital Argerich, where I trained. From him I learned, among other things, starting with the clinical picture and the patient instead of diagnostic or therapeutic method. This may seem a truism, but before the profusion of own procedures of the enormous growth of the specialty, installing this kind of thinking is central at the time to select the best cost-effective options for our patients. How much I have liked to see him among the audience, perhaps outlining a subtle smile of approval! But for those things in life, this has not been possible. Anyway, as I said at some time, people do not disappear completely if they remain in the memory of others and in the case of figures of the stature of Bertolasi, in the example of conduct of others. That is the case of Bertolasi personally and of many people that we have known, loved and admired him. In addition, he is everywhere among us, in the presence of his wife, who with great love has decided to join me in this very special moment for me. Thanks, Charito!

To my friends and my family, small but loyal, for reminding me with their presence the value of affection and of my roots.

Finally, my parents. My mother, on the request for her cares and at the same time for her subtle demand for perfection that has left on me the mark of her affection expressed throughout life in ways not always

conventional. My father, that Asturian who, with his little primary education, but with a natural intelligence that allowed him to clearly discern things, came to our noble land in 1951 to make the America. In his case, he achieved through Argentine dream, which allowed him to raise a family, provide a superior education to his own, to his son, and crystallize in this soil the miracle of social progress. He valued education, so gave it to me and I did not need to work to study and train professionally. However, he made it very clear that one was not more than others because of being more educated, since people are worth for what they are rather than what they know. He also made it very clear that the gains are obtained through hard work, perseverance and sacrifice. Almost unwillingly and unknowingly obviously, he was saying me what the Romans told anyone who would listen to them: you get to the big things through a narrow way, *ad augusta per angusta* Romans said. Unfortunately, we have all seen that in the world, and especially in our country, there are other ways to achieve goals: wide, comfortable, easy to navigate roads, without effort, without work, without responsibility, and many times without values. Of course goals are achieved! However, these roads are, for society as a whole, very harmful and to the individuals that pass them very little uplifting and always unworthy.

That Argentine's dream, which probably many of you are also a product, is sadly lethargic in our time for diverse reasons of long standing, among which may be mentioned the excessive individualism without social cohesion and lack of attachment to the norms, rules and values.

You may wonder what will all this have to do with the Sociedad Argentina de Cardiología? Of course, it has much to do. ty Our Society, throughout its history

has provided opportunities for scientific development, academic freedom, recognition of merit and ethical values and forces us to put the association interests over the personal ones even although they are very legitimate. Intangible values, some would say, are difficult to measure, but believe me, they are more consistent than steel.

Many times, when we see around us both in professional activity as well as ordinary citizens, situations that discourage us, immense problems that seem insoluble, the absence of values and recognition to the efforts that tend to make us give up, we think for a moment that we cannot always solve the big problems, but we can start with our environment: I can not solve, for example, the problem of dirtiness in a big city like Buenos Aires, but I can keep my house clean and by extension my neighborhood.

Therefore, my last words are addressed to young cardiologists and those who have management responsibilities in our Society to comment on their environment this reality of values and merits of our entity, to approach it, not with a stingy purpose exclusive benefit for Society, but the values it can show along its history and noble personal quality that comes from communal involvement.

To participate at the Sociedad Argentina de Cardiología certainly will make us better doctors, cardiologists and probably better citizens. Since this cell to higher values, some slaps may be given that awaken that Argentine's dream, on the other hand, we all deserve as well as our noble and beloved Country.

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