

SAC President's 2015 Opening Speech

Discurso inaugural de la Presidencia de la SAC 2015

Firstly, I want to thank those who trusted me to act as President of the Argentine Society of Cardiology.

It is an honor, a privilege and a great responsibility.

Several weeks ago, while thinking of what I was going to say at such an important moment of my life, it was not easy to find the words to summarize, in just a few minutes, so many ideas, projects, dreams, feelings and acknowledgments.

I shall start with the core idea of our administration.

1. TO CHANGE OR TO CONTINUE

These words seem to be antagonistic but are, in fact, complementary.

In 2007, on the occasion of the Society's 70th anniversary, each president was asked which had been, according to his criteria, the greatest achievement during his administration; Dr. Trongé's answer was chosen: "*I have been a president who started projects completed by others and continued with projects started by others*".

This will be the principle which will govern our actions this year.

2. INTEGRATION AND COMMUNICATION

One of the aims we have proposed is the integration of SAC in order to achieve the greatest efficiency of our human and economic resources.

This year, the first step in the domestic sphere was the creation of the Coordination of Areas; next year, we want to advance with the *Coordination of Congresses, communication and publications* (Journal - PROSAC - Consensus statements).

In the external sphere, we want an integrated, inclusive and participative SAC. All SAC members will be invited to work, to move from being spectators to actors, to not only raise the issues, but to be part of the solution.

3. AUSTERITY AND CREATIVITY

We shall continue with austerity and expenditure control, two of the cornerstones of Dr. Tajer's administration.

SAC needs resources; the Society has a *structural economic deficit* that is continuously growing, due not only to the very high inflation in our country, but also to higher labor costs and the need to give professional status to new areas for SAC to meet current demands.

Creativity will be the engine to generate resources and more projects and make those ongoing more efficient.

4. AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

This year we have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health and with the Argentine Federation of Cardiology to develop the *First Registry of Cardiovascular Diseases in Argentina*.

During our congress in October, the president of a Latin American Society emphasized the importance of the agreement with the Ministry, to which I responded that although it had been really very relevant, most important was the agreement with FAC.

In 1998, when I was the Director of the Council on Hypertension, a physician asked me about my position regarding FAC and SAHA. I replied that a scientific society would never be an enemy; the only enemies I had were *ignorance, indifference and disease*, and that other scientific societies would be our allies to fight against them.

This year we have started working together with the *Argentine Society of Medicine* on the Multidisciplinary Congress and the Argentine Congress.

We did so because we are convinced that in such prevalent topics as hypertension, diabetes and prevention, *we care about the other's point of view and opinion*, and we must share discussion panels.

We shall extend this invitation to other societies of internal medicine.

This year we shall make an agreement with the *Argentine Society of Pediatrics* to form part of our congress and we shall work together in worrying issues.

We have always focused on congenital heart defects, but nowadays hypertension, obesity, diabetes, poor nutrition and sedentary life-style in children and adolescents are serious problems, and we cannot and should not wait to take care of them when they become adults.

In summary, I want to share a reflection made by my brother Fernando when I told him I had been elected President of SAC: "*Remember that if you walk alone you will go faster, if you walk with others you will go further*".

Our aim in the Society is to reduce cardiovascular mortality by 25% in 2025; we shall only succeed *if we walk along with other scientific societies*.

OUR SOCIETY TODAY AND THE PROJECTS TO DEVELOP DURING 2015

We shall continue to consolidate our commitment to reduce cardiovascular mortality in Argentina by 25% in 2025.

We have started with myocardial infarction, and on this topic we will work together with the National

Ministry of Health and the *Argentine Federation of Cardiology* to carry out the *Permanent National Registry of Cardiovascular Diseases*.

Next, we shall start with the program *Stent for Life*, which we may probably translate as *Tiempo es vida* (Time is life), and the European Society of Cardiology's advice will complement the registry of infarction with a program by sectors to improve the resources and the time of implementing reperfusion strategies.

The Argentine Congress and the Scientific Committee

Since last year, the Argentine Congress takes place at La Rural premises; this decision was resisted at first but is now accepted by everybody because it produced an important change.

I want to emphasize the anonymous work of the *Scientific Committee members* throughout the year to develop a scientific program of the highest academic level.

My gratitude to all the scientific committees.

The Area of Districts

Last year, when I was appointed in the Area of Districts, I set short-term and long-term goals for myself.

The short-term goal was the creation of the Multi-disciplinary Congress, which was not intended to replace our District Sessions but, on the contrary, would serve to improve them and adapt them to the reality of each city of the country.

Long-term goals: we are working with district physicians to make them assume a leading role and have an active participation in the decisions and in the Society Areas.

An example of this initiative is that, for the first time, three physicians from the districts will take part in the Scientific Committee of the Congress in October.

Imaging Congress

During the last years, this event has been continuously growing and has become the most important meeting in topics related to echocardiography, computed tomography and nuclear cardiology.

The Joint Scientific Sessions with the American Society of Echocardiography, the European Association of Cardiovascular Imaging, the Inter-American Society of Cardiology Echocardiography Committee (ECOSIAC, Comité de Ecocardiografía de la Sociedad Interamericana de Cardiología) and other societies, have given an international status to this Congress.

In summary, in just two years, we have moved from:

The Regional District Sessions to the Multi-disciplinary Congress.

The Echocardiography Sessions to the Imaging Congress.

From the Sheraton Congress to La Rural as Congress venue.

Such great achievement and growth have to be sustainable; therefore, they should be accompanied by a modern structure according to the circumstances.

For this reason, as I have previously mentioned, a Congress Unit will be created to coordinate our technical and human resources and make them more efficient.

Instructional Resource Area (IRA), virtual SAC and web site

The virtual area of the SAC has experienced a significant change in the last year.

Today, 68% of participants in SAC courses are taking online courses.

This has meant an enormous advance from the instructional and economic point of view and, most important, we have achieved the target planned: to construct a national SAC which grants physicians in Catamarca, Corrientes or in the outskirts of the city of Buenos Aires the same benefits provided to physicians in the capital city.

The absence of an editor for the website was an unresolved matter; this position will be held next year by Dr. Jorge Thierer.

SAC Young Community

During the Argentine Congress that took place this year, I chaired the *launching of SAC Young Community*; during the presentation, I expressed that I thought this was the most promising session of the Congress, and I am convinced it will be so.

Leaders are born leaders and the Society wants to provide them the space to develop this leadership.

Two years ago, young physicians did not approach our Society, as they perceived it too distant to become part and work in it. SAC Young Community was created to revert that feeling.

And we are succeeding; one of the achievements is having received an official letter from the European Society of Cardiology inviting us to take part in two sessions between *ESC Cardiologists of Tomorrow* and *SAC Young Community* during Rome 2016, implementing for the first time the organization of a cocktail for the younger generation.

Remodeling the SAC building

Our Society needs changes and new technology.

This means a sustained effort so as not to interfere with educational programs and the core SAC priorities; therefore, this cannot be planned for only one presidency period.

Thus, we have decided that we need a three-year period to make these changes; at the end of this period, we shall have a completely renewed SAC, from new teaching rooms to the best technology available to carry out on-site and online courses.

WikiCardio

A 100% of patients search the Internet for information about their disease or the adverse effects of the

medication prescribed by the physician.

A 100% of physicians tell our patients not to search the Internet, *as the information available is not reliable*.

WikiCardio is born today.

WikiCardio will be created to provide reliable information, raise awareness, improve the adherence and thus it will be the *educational tool for patients*, to achieve SAC's target of reducing mortality by 25% in 2025.

SAC has the prestige and confidence of the medical community and the entire society, to ensure the success of this project.

We believe it will become a consultation website for all the patients and their relatives with cardiovascular diseases and one of the websites with more visits in Argentina.

Creation of the Strategic Planning Work Group

This work group will carry out the strategic plan approved two years ago, with the purpose of elaborating documents and suggestions to achieve future progress.

Its implementation needs the development of projects with targets, deadlines and indicators to assess its achievement.

In summary, the vision and the mission of the Society are:

- *To be mentors in education and information in cardiovascular health.*
- *To be a scientific organization, leader in cardiovascular health, dedicated to implement continuous education and permanent evaluation of professionals.*
- *To be the core interlocutor in the elaboration of strategies for the promotion of health and prevention of cardiovascular disease, with community outreach.*
- *To develop research policies and to maintain links with the international scientific community.*

At the moment of looking over the activities developed by the Society, its Congresses, the Journal, PRO-SAC, Consensus statements, Virtual SAC, Electronic Clinical Records, Councils, Teaching and Research, International SAC and SAC Young Community, one finds absolute coherence between what SAC is and what it wants to be.

MY LIFE IN SAC

- My activity in SAC started in the Council on Hypertension, where I was able to share a space of discussion and learning, typical of a Scientific Society, with masters in hypertension as Dr. Taquini, Dr. Fasciolo, Dr. Becú, Dr. Carlos Romero, Dr. Hugo Baglivo, Dr. Luis Juncos and Dr. Emilio Kuschnir.
- My time in the Cardiology Foundation was crucial, as I became aware of the importance of our community arm and of all the programs developed for the community.

- Being Treasurer during *Dr. Barrero's* Presidency, gave me a view of the Society management; he taught me how to solve conflicts without generating them.

- When I finished the coordination of the Scientific Committee in 2012, I sent an e-mail for Christmas to all the members of the Committee, obviously including Cristina and Juliana, saying: "One year ago, we did not know each other, and now we are the Class of 2012 Graduates", as Juan Talavera baptized it.

During that year, we shared the organization of the Congress, which showed the best of our personal and scientific capabilities.

Work joined us at first, and finally, the affections. What else can one ask for? This is what I call "*the magic of the scientist*".

- Last year, I took part in the Districts: we worked together to achieve what we are by definition, an Argentine Society, destroying any geographic barrier with the conviction that it must be so.
- And this year, my return to the Board of Directors was the summit of a cycle of learning, understanding and maturity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, to *Dr. Carlos Tajer*, who shared my first day as resident on duty in the residency program of the Hospital Italiano on May 2, 1978; 35 years later, life and destiny joined us again to share the management of SAC.

With his intelligence and leadership skills he could solve most of the difficulties we faced this year.

I also acknowledge the Board of Directors that developed a joint work with Dr. Tajer to solve these issues.

I wish to *thank, highlight and congratulate* all the SAC staff for their work, commitment, efficiency and professionalism.

I also want to mention *all the physicians nationwide* who work *ad honorem*, that is, for the honor of, HONOR, which is the founding principle of our Society. My thanks to them all.

INSTITUTIONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to mention very specially the *Fundación Cossio* and *Dr. Pedro Cossio*, for their permanent and unconditional support to our Society, particularly to the Journal, and for the young investigator scholarship they will grant next year.

The *pharmaceutical industry and medical equipment providers*, for their constant support to our Society, in Congresses, courses and projects.

The *medical institutions*, as ICBA, Sanatorio Güemes, Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires and Sanatorio Finochietto, for their support to our Society.

I hope next year other institutions will want to join these initiatives.

I also remember *Dr. Álvaro Sosa Liprandi's* words

in his presidency opening speech when he said: "science without investment is science fiction".

With the support from you all, science is not a dream but a reality. Thank you.

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to mention some persons who have been very important in my personal and academic life.

Firstly, to my old friend *Dr. Marcos Marín*, who always stands by me and who helped me, with his maturity and intelligence, to make the most important decisions in my life.

I have the same feeling for *Dr. Álvaro Sosa Liprandi*, whom I met during his interview to enter the residency program of the Hospital Italiano, and with whom I have shared since then, 30 years of friendship.

To *Dr. Hernán Doval*, who was a model during my training in the residency program of the Hospital Italiano, not only for his intelligence and medical thought, but also for the values he represents, as ethics and commitment with the truth.

We all know what is right to do, but sometimes it may be difficult. Doval never hesitated to do as his conscience dictated it was correct, and many times he did it at the expense of great personal sacrifice.

To *Dr. Ricardo Esper*, who accepted me as a member of his staff in 1982 and encouraged me to enter this Society. His advice was crucial in very important moments of my life.

To *Dr. Hugo Baglivo*, with whom I gave my first steps in hypertension. In 1985, he brought me to the SAC Council on Hypertension, which turned out to be the best environment to think, discuss and learn.

To *Dr. René Favalaro*, who returned to Argentina with the dream of founding an institution with medical and scientific excellence, social commitment and medical humanism, and gave me a place in his Fundación, where I could develop under these principles the medicine I always dreamed of.

To my sister Chichita and my brother Fernando, the ever present companions of my life.

To all my patients, some of them present here, because they give sense to my vocation since I chose to become a doctor when I was 5 years old.

SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

Dr. Bertolasi said:

"I am deeply affected to perceive discouragement and pessimism in the face of a disoriented country and a mediocre ruling class. A country without long-term projects. Understanding that we are also a ruling class in our work, that we can acquire greater power and influence if we act as an intelligent community and can think in the long-term, provides the framework to

overcome these feelings"

This is the way marked by persons like Dr. Bertolasi and that we assume the commitment to continue.

In his opening speech as president, *Dr. Carlos Barero* spoke about his father, who left Asturias and arrived in Argentina with a dream in 1951. "The Argentine dream" allowed him to start a family, give his son higher education and crystallize the miracle of social progress in this country.

That was the same dream of *Dr. Tajer's* parents who came to Argentina from Poland in 1931, and of my grandparents, who arrived in this country from Catalonia at the beginning of the 20th century.

For this reason, I stand up when I hear the Argentine National Anthem, not as a reflex action learnt at school, but because I feel proud of being Argentine.

The same pride I feel of belonging to the Argentine Society of Cardiology.

- A scientific society that, as *Dr. Bertolasi* stated, *never in all its history had an allegation of corruption.*
- That as evidenced today, *respects and pays tribute to the elders and welcomes the younger generation.*
- *That invests all its resources in health care and education.*

When I am asked about what SAC gives me, I answer:

SAC is a Society that lets us dream, that values as honor, humanism, education and health care are possible in our dear Argentina.

And that our parents' and our "Argentine dream" is possible.

I shall recall today, December 4, as the day I assumed the Presidency of the Argentine Society of Cardiology and paid tribute to my parents.

On a day like this, 70 years ago, on December 4, 1944, they got married and my story began as a product of that love.

My parents gave me the most important things a person can receive: life, love, time, example, a family, my siblings Chichita and Fernando, and values. Values as honesty and that everything can be achieved with passion, work and effort.

These are the values I shall put at the disposal of the Argentine Society of Cardiology.

That is all. Thank you very much.

Guillermo Fábregues, MD^{MtSAC}

President of the Argentine Society of Cardiology