

## Initial Assessment: Sharing the Journey

### *Balance inicial: compartiendo el recorrido*

Dear colleagues,

By the end of the first quarter of this year, the COVID-19 pandemic situation still continues. We continue to cope with the resulting isolation, and many of us have even suffered from COVID, which has affected us personally or our loved ones. In this context, after four months of —mostly virtual— intense management, I would like to share with you the journey we have made so far.

In January and February, we held meetings with all the SAC areas to evaluate projects, needs and opportunities for improvement. The participation of SAC Young Community and the Regional Districts in different sectors of the Society was encouraged. Our academic activities started in March.

What follows is a brief summary of the activities carried out according to the different aspects that concern our Society.

**In the scientific-educational aspect**, we started the Biannual Course for Residents and SAC Careers, with 200 enrolled participants in the second year.

We opened 21 courses with 1543 participants, evidencing a significant growth.

In the March-April period, 13 attractive webinars with 5522 attendees were organized.

Together with the SAC País Districts, we aimed at greater integration and long-lasting ties; the districts, for their part, have shown great interest in planning activities, organizing 12 activities (courses, conferences, workshops) with 2169 attendees in March and April.

Using Zoom or YouTube, the Scientific Councils have held 34 workshops so far this year, with 8500 participants. We have planned 68 more workshops, four symposiums and one conference up to December 2021. By May 2021, participation in the activity increased by 50%. Moreover, the SAC website also recorded a significant increase of visitors.

We continue working on the organization of the Argentine Congress of Cardiovascular Imaging and the Argentine Congress of Cardiology, to be held virtually for the second year in a row. We are planning a very ambitious scientific program including innovative activities.

Together with the Coordination of Areas, we are organizing activities to encourage greater integration with the Argentine Cardiology Foundation.

**In the field of health policies**, the National Ministry of Health convened us, together with other scientific societies, to resume the analysis of the current situation and look into joint actions related to cardiovascular health. We are working on a post-COVID training course for primary care physicians. In addition, we are participating in the final stage of the development of the National Guidelines for Cardiovascular Prevention.

We have signed a cooperation and assistance framework agreement with the Integral Medical Attention Program (SAC-PAMI) to carry out research projects and activities, and a specific agreement to take part in an external interdisciplinary commission to provide advice and proposals for improving the list of drugs included in the Physicians' drug index with essential and free medicines for its affiliates.

Given that the National Institute of Social Services for Retirees and Pensioners (INSSJP) authorities have shown openness to work together, we are designing two other specific projects on atrial fibrillation and aortic stenosis that we will propose to them.

Activities with the Argentine Chamber of Medicinal Specialties (CAEME) and 26 medical societies together with the National Ministry of Health were resumed to work on a new vaccination campaign and on the necessary measures to address the challenges posed by this second wave of the pandemic.

**Regarding activities with national societies**, we were visited by Dr. Eduardo Perna, President of the Argentine Federation of Cardiology (FAC), and we signed an agreement to work jointly on position papers, activities, round tables, and consensuses, among other activities. We also signed a joint agreement to take position on the publication by the National Commission for Health Technology Assessment (CONETEC), "Ninth Health Technology Assessment Report: Direct oral anticoagulants in nonvalvular atrial fibrillation"; our suggestions were listened to and the most conflicting aspects of the document were modified.

With the Argentine Society of Gastroenterology (SAGE), we organized a very successful first conference together, with three round tables in which topics of common interest to both specialties were discussed. Both the Young SAGE and the SAC had a very active role in the presentation of clinical cases. A total of 627 colleagues took part in this event.

We signed an agreement with the Society of Ne-

phrology for the writing of a book on topics shared by both specialties.

A framework agreement was signed with the Argentine Association of Respiratory Medicine (AAMR) for collaborative work in different educational activities.

Together with the Argentine College of Interventional Cardioangiologists (CACI), we are organizing a virtual conference on stroke prevention in patients with atrial fibrillation and high risk of bleeding, in which the Argentine College of Cardiovascular Surgeons (CACCV) and the Argentine Society of Hematology (SAH) will also participate.

**As for the activities with international societies**, we participated in a webinar for the World Chagas Disease Day together with the World Heart Federation (WHF) and the Inter-American Society of Cardiology (SIAC), in order to give visibility and attention to this disease, raise awareness on the importance of early detection, expand diagnostic coverage, and promote equitable access to clinical care for this condition.

Together with the SIAC, we have also participated in the Gender Equality Campaign for the International Women's Day.

In addition, together with the WHF we are part of the COVID-19 registry, Global Study on COVID-19 and CVD.

We had leadership meetings with the American College of Cardiology (ACC), the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), the WHF, the Brazilian Society of Cardiology, and the Uruguayan Society of Cardiology.

We agreed with the ACC to host a webinar together, to participate in the next Latin American Regional Conference, being part of its organizing committee, and to send speakers to our next congresses.

The ESC invited us to the Spring Summit, where we took part of interesting exchanges on topics such as telemedicine, new technologies, cardiovascular care in the future and post-pandemic. We are organizing a joint webinar, and we have been invited to an official joint session at the next 21st ESC virtual Congress.

The Venezuelan Society of Cardiology invited us to participate in the Cardiovascular Course of Caracas, where the SAC was in charge of the segment "Thrombosis in Cardiology" with six lectures. We also took part in the Peruvian Congress of Cardiology.

**Regarding administrative organization**, we continue with the austerity policy, maintaining our financial balance and projecting sustainable investments and diversification of income sources. We have undertaken an administrative reorganization to plan the maintenance of our headquarters, and since some of our staff is about to retire, we are training the new staff so that they can learn from those who are more experienced.

Even in the midst of the pandemic, the SAC is unstoppable and works as a great team, and continues its development in fine health and spirits. We have been able to maintain our predecessors' entrepreneurial spirit thanks to the effort and unconditional support of our members, who every day bet on the growth and strength of our Society.

It is true that there is still more to be done. We will always have renewed goals and new horizons to direct the steps of this institution. Those of us who take the responsibility for leading the Argentine Society of Cardiology are aware of this, and it is also a challenge and a great honor for us.

**Alejandro R. Hershson**

President of the Argentine Society of Cardiology