

Participation of IJMS in the EIRCECS in Paraguay: Growing through the Ambassadors

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The Experience

The International Meeting of Student Scientific Journals of Health Sciences (EIRCECS, from the Spanish Encuentro Internacional de Revistas Científicas de Estudiantes de las Ciencias de la Salud) is an event held annually at the International Scientific Congress (CCI from the Spanish Congreso Científico Internacional) of the Latin American Federation of Scientific Societies of Medical Students (FELSOCEM from the Spanish Federación Latinoamericana de Sociedades Científicas de Estudiantes de Medicina) since 1998.¹ The last meeting was held at the XXII CCI - Asunción, Paraguay 2017, and the organization of the meeting was in charge of the journal Discover Medicine, a Paraguayan student scientific journal. Due to geographic proximity, usually only Latin American journals participated in most of the meetings. Therefore, the participation of the International Journal of Medical Students (IJMS) in this meeting was a novelty.

Student Journals

Eight student journals participated in the event, with some of them having more than 30 years of experience and others only months of circulation (**Table 1**). It is interesting that the IJMS has its origins in the XXIV CCI of the FELSOCEM in 2009 and the primary goal is to be an international divulgation tool for medical students using the highest standards of scientific publication. Compared with other journals, all the content is in English, which allows a wider audience, as well as articles from all around the world.²

Development of the Event

Several lectures focused on expediting the editorial process, improving the quality of publications, increasing the submission of manuscripts, and steps to start a journal. Workshops were also developed to describe the most frequent difficulties and offer strategies to solve them. During the meeting, the work of student journals was highlighted, which all seek to meet international requirements. Although most of them present indexations in databases, none has managed to enter the most

important databases such as SCOPUS and ISI – Web of Science, which encourages us to continue improving.³ Student journals have proven to be an important means of dissemination in Latin America, where students and young researchers can become familiar with the scientific publication and also participate in editorial processes.³ However, difficulties are frequent, such as: lack of support from university authorities, limited financial resources, deficient scientific training, and lack of time. Therefore, the discontinuity of student journals is a frequent risk.⁴

Ambassador Program

Since the beginning of my medical career, I have been interested in scientific development and dissemination, considering that writing skills lack in many medical programs and are fundamental for the advances of research. Consequently, I have been Ambassador of IJMS for Paraguay since 2016, and I represented the journal in this event through this position. I had the opportunity to give a talk about IJMS, its organization, especially the roles of Ambassadors and Partners that are very innovative strategies to increase the impact, and the achievements, such as the broad indexation in databases. At that time, excluding IJMS, 5 of the 7 student journals were indexed in databases, with an average of 5 indexations each one. Instead, IJMS reached 31 indexations.

Importance

The opportunity to share among student journals is very useful (**Figure 1**). Medical students are not unaware of the growing trend of science and its importance for development. Therefore, they search places where they can develop their scientific skills. Considering that clinical researchers are scarce, the opportunity to become familiar with scientific processes in the undergraduate level makes student scientific journals an ideal place to promote future physicians committed with research and scientific dissemination.^{5,6} In Latin America, scientific production is low compared to other regions, but the attitude of medical students who decide to be promoters of scientific growth and an example of self-improvement is remarkable.

Table 1. Journals that Attended EIRCECS 2017.

Journal	Country	First Edition
Revista Médico Científica	Panama	1980
CIMEL	Peru	1995
Revista Científica Ciencia Médica	Bolivia	1996
Revista Científica	Bolivia	2004
IJMS	United States of America	2013
FONENDO	Bolivia	2017
Colombian Journal of Medical Students	Colombia	2017
Discover Medicine	Paraguay	2017

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Conclusion

When considering this experience, it is notorious that IJMS has an immense potential due to the great influence, because of its several Partners, more than 11.000 followers on social networks and more than 120 Ambassadors distributed in 50 countries, which could lead

initiatives to develop the skills related to scientific publication throughout the world. It is an optimal time to develop the potential of the Ambassadors of IJMS that could develop from scientific writing courses in different languages to multi-centric projects to continue increasing the prestige and influence of our journal.

Figure 1. The International Meeting of Student Scientific Journals of Health Sciences (EIRCECS in Spanish). Asunción, Paraguay. Year 2017.



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