

Scientific councils, islands, bridges and archipelagos

In the first President's Letter of this year I have expressed my opinion regarding the SAC structure. I have reaffirmed the national character of the society and its constitution by members.

In this letter I wish to address a fundamental component in the SAC construction and progress, its scientific Councils.

Councils were created as a need of the members to discuss and expand some topics either because they work or have a special interest in a particular aspect of Cardiology.

They are the natural field where practicing cardiologists with a common interest, discuss novelties and update concepts, in presentations, symposia and Congress workshops. Furthermore, Councils review the "state of the art" expressing their opinion in consensus developed on a specific topic and, in many cases, with the creation of registries they generate important epidemiological information.

The emergence and generalization of some diagnostic methods has given rise to new Councils, for instance the Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance and Tomography Councils. Also, the importance of some topics has promoted the introduction of new areas of discussion, such as the Heart Failure and Pulmonary Hypertension Council. Other Councils have modified the name to reflect their growth, like the Hemodynamics Council which has changed its name to Hemodynamics and Interventionist Cardiology Council because in addition to its diagnostic component it has become a valuable therapeutic tool.

A more global concept of cardiovascular disease has led our Society to establish the Stroke Council and a more integral interpretation of the human being, accepting that our patient and we are much more than a group of cells and physiological mechanisms, to create the Psycho-social Aspects Council.

Acknowledgment that the work of the cardiologist cannot be properly conducted without Nursing and Technical support specifically trained in the different areas of cardiology has promoted the emergence and development of the corresponding Councils.

This short description allows us to understand that Councils are the expression of the development of

our specialty and that its changes are accompanied by the creation of new Councils and their modifications.

It is also necessary to acknowledge the heterogeneous progress of each Council, reflecting, among other things, the temporal position of a certain topic and the number of colleagues interested in this topic, as for example, a diagnostic practice. On the other hand, a dissimilar growth might indicate differences in the organization and stimulus in the direction of the Council.

Councils are the structure with the greatest authority on a topic; hence, its director and secretary must meet the highest scientific qualification granted by our society that is to be a full SAC members (MTSAC). Moreover, as expressed in a previous letter, access to certain positions in a scientific society should rely on scientific merit.

It is also true that in order to keep a constant interest and enthusiasm, it is necessary to renew the Board of the Council. This is a healthy policy. As protection from the eventual lack of experience of younger members that reach high positions in a Council, the assistance of the advisory members of the Council is foreseen and should be taken into account.

It is the aim of the SAC to encourage Councils growth, both at their scientific and organizational levels. To accomplish this objective, several aspects must be considered. With regard to the role of SAC, it must support and promote Council activities and in the case of the Council, the main demand, which fortunately is the rule, is to get involved in its activities and accept its responsibilities

I do not see a Council as a solitary island. My vision is of an island which connects with other SAC areas, as Research, the Districts or the Consensus and organizes activities with other Councils. This would allow them to profit from the scientific and operative capacities of other areas as well as share their own.

Councils should be part of an archipelago with communicating and permanently open bridges.

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