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GASTROENTEROLOGÍA  
DE MÉXICO

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## EDITORIAL

# A tower of paper spanning eighty years<sup>☆</sup>



## Ochenta años de la torre de papel

The *Asociación Mexicana de Gastroenterología (AMG)* was founded on July 16, 1935 and was silent for only 2 months. On September 15th of that same year, the first issue of its official publication appeared: the *Revista de Gastroenterología de México*; "I sincerely wish the *Asociación Mexicana de Gastro-Enterología* a long and prosperous life" were among the first words written by Dr. Abraham Ayala-González, founder and director.

For more than 22 years, Dr. Ayala-González was the director of the journal and few changes to its format were made: 2 to 4 original articles and annotated bibliographies, and the majority of authors were from the *Hospital General de México*, though not exclusively, as well as some foreigners. The articles were published sequentially, in the order they were received, and because of their obvious quality, I can confidently assume this included prior acceptance by Dr. Ayala-González and his assistants. His long tenure in the journal administration cannot be regarded as immobility, because he was always accompanied by a changing Editor or Editorial Committee. The content of all that material is a treasure, because it is the testimony of 2 decades in the evolution of Mexican gastroenterology and its vicissitudes. All human creative work is meritorious, but that first step followed by constancy is the most important.

Elected at the assembly on July 14, 1958, Dr. Raúl Fournier Villada took charge of the *AMG* and the journal; in the May-June issue, he now appeared as a committee director. The changes came quickly: the annotated bibliographies were suspended, the statutes of the association were published, the journal was dedicated to a single theme, and editing advances were made. The improvements were continued by the editors that followed. In the 1961 January-February issue, the Editorial Commission Guidelines of the *AMG* appeared, in which all the journal functions

were organized and their norms were established for the first time.

In the 1960s, the journal was managed by a director or president, accompanied by a subdirector and a commission or counsel or editorial committee, remaining in their positions for years. In the 1970s the director served from 1971 to 1976 and 2 editors from 1977 to 1980. From 1981 to 1987 there was a single editor the first year and a second editor for the remaining years. The format of 2 editors-in-chief and 2 associate editors serving for 3 years was begun in 1988, with the associate editors becoming the editors-in-chief in the subsequent period.

Without a doubt, the quality of the journal was progressively growing in the 1960s and the beginning of the 70s, because on December 7, 1974, it was accepted by the *Índex Medicus*-a reflection of the editorial work of that time, as well as the maturity of the association.

Despite the requirements of inclusion in the index, in 1977 the journal fell behind for 2 years, forcing the next editors to produce 2 volumes every six months to fill the void. In 1977 and 1978 the journal came out every four months and has continued to do so since 1979.

Throughout the journal's existence, each editor or editorial group has contributed an element of improvement: a change in the type of paper, the cover design, changes with respect to international norms, registration in national and foreign institutes, the quest for self-sufficiency, the translations of a number of issues into English, or later, the English version of the journal on its own website, its entrance into the *EEE\*111*, the online system for the submission and revision of scientific works from beginning to end, and its continuing presence in the *Índex Medicus*, *Índex Latinoamericano*, *IMBIOMED*, *PubMed-Medline*, *DOYMA*, *LANDEX*, and *Scopus* - a genuine *tower of paper*.

In an analysis of the last 5 years, the journal impact factor has risen from 0.112 in 2010 to 0.375 in 2014, the percentage of self-citations has decreased from 41.67% in 2010 to 0.00% in 2013 and 2014, and the external citations have increased from 7% in 2010 to 24% in 2014, but the annual

<sup>☆</sup> Please cite this article as: de la Torre-Bravo A. Ochenta años de la torre de papel. *Revista de Gastroenterología de México*. 2015;80:117-118.

number of published articles has decreased from 107 in 2010 and 136 in 2011 to 64 in 2014 (data obtained from Elsevier). The decrease in the number of articles published and the paradoxical increase in the impact factor can be partially explained by the over 35% rejection rate. Evidence of this can be recognized in the quality of the material published in this past year. We members of the association have not been generous in submitting our work, preferring foreign journals, whereas contrastingly, more and more submissions are being received from beyond our borders.

And thus, this is a success story. Undeniably, part of this success corresponds to the AMG. It is the essential structure, of which the journal is a part, its *official publication*, and it is the organism that guides the editorial orientation and nominates, from among its finest talents, the editors. The progress of the association is also measured by other parameters, such as the number of members, 17 in 1935 and over 1,500 today, the enormous amount of academic activities and their outstanding quality, and the indisputable prestige of respectability, professionalism, and dignity. Another integral part of this success are the authors and readers, elements that bestow the true value upon any means of written communication. Nevertheless, in accordance with the above-stated, it is the editors who deserve the most recognition, bound to one another from beginning to end

in a common mission. Each one of the editors has faced challenges and provided solutions and innovations, dedicating their best efforts, hard work, and talents to a desire that arose from the origins of our association. Quality and excellence are the apparent aims of the current editors.

It is simplistic to view the function of editor as an honorary position. The editor has a profound command of the speciality, of the analysis of medical literature, of the complexity of statistics, of scientific quality, of the currentness of knowledge, and must make value judgements from an international perspective.

Upon approaching the eightieth anniversary of the *Revista de Gastroenterología de México*, as a spontaneous messenger of collective pride, I pay homage to all those who have been protagonists in its greatness and it is my firm desire that each future written page be a message of scientific knowledge and progress for the association, for Mexico, and for the entire world.

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