

2018 is the Big Bang Year for the Inter-District Meetings of the Argentine Society of Cardiology

El 2018 es el año del Big Bang de las Jornadas Interdistritales de la Sociedad Argentina de Cardiología

The Inter-district Meetings were launched in Esquel, as a need to expand the scientific activity of the Argentine Society of Cardiology beyond the usual framework of the Argentine Congress of Cardiology (SAC) held in Buenos Aires.

The creation of Regional Districts in cities of the interior of the country (currently 34) was crucial for the rotating development of the Meetings in different provinces over the years.

The structure of the Meetings was formed by a Scientific Committee and an Organizing Committee, jointly constituted mostly by members of the Board of Directors of the Regional District belonging to the city where the Meeting was taking place and by members of the Board of Directors of the Argentine Society of Cardiology. There were also sessions developed by Cardiology Technicians, Nursing Meetings and community activities.

Towards the end of the 90's the program included oral and poster presentation of free scientific studies, with merit to become member of the Society, which was an incentive for numerous cardiologists who wished to report their research work.

In the last years, the program incorporated Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, and thus the Meetings became Multidisciplinary, in an attempt to share the scientific activity with other specialties and broaden the attendance scope.

However, in the last decade, it became noticeable that the audience consisted mainly of Physicians, Technicians and Nurses of the city or nearby areas where the Meetings were held, professionals interested in presenting their scientific work and members of SAC Board of Directors. The presence of the different associated regional Districts was minimal, except for the officially invited District Presidents, casting doubt on the "inter-district" purpose of the Meetings.

The causes leading to the transformation of the Meetings as local events were analyzed in the last year, and the conclusion was that the possibilities each district had to develop scientific activity was not being considered. As if it were an iceberg, we were only seeing the part emerging from the surface, ignoring all the potential lying beneath.

For this reason, it was decided to change the paradigm of the Meetings, transforming the Inter-District Meetings into eight Regional Meetings. During the meeting of the Regional District Presidents at the Argentine Congress of Cardiology on October 2017, a "regional" diagram was agreed upon, consisting of four or five Regional Districts, each of which would organize in a rotating manner an annual Meeting. I would like to highlight the valuable task performed by SAC Districts' Area, which stepped up from organizing one annual Meeting to coordinating eight in the same period.

In the new plan, the scientific program would be developed by the Regional Districts organizing each Meeting, with the close collaboration of SAC Districts' Area. It would include the participation of Physicians, Technicians, Nurses, Residents (through CONAREC) and the community. Speakers would have to be mainly local, jointly agreeing on the participation of speakers from other regions with the Districts' Area, according to their availability. We would thus try to stimulate the Districts' members to have a more active role as speakers, and for many of them, this would be their first experience in mass assemblies and the first step to face participating in the Argentine Congress of the Society in the City of Buenos Aires. Another objective was to increase original scientific investigation in the Districts, with the inclusions of sessions and workshops to facilitate writing of scientific abstracts, and clarify doubts concerning research methods and statistics. To complement these goals, SAC Research Area created this year a "Help Desk" to which all methodological queries to write an abstract or full article can be made. The possibility of presenting scientific works is extended to all Meetings, which means, all the year round, with different deadlines for abstract presentation. The first Regional Meeting was held on April 20 and 21 at Plaza Shopping in the city of Bahía Blanca, incorporating, in addition to the local District, that of Viedma, La Pampa and Atlantic. It had a multidisciplinary character, including topics on Internal Medicine, Pediatrics and Biochemistry, as well as roundtables with Nurses and Technicians. More than 1,400 participants attended this Meeting

where 47 scientific works were presented, including subjects such as “How to report a study in 250 words” and “10 key points for a successful presentation or poster”, with the aim of providing tools and stimulate scientific research especially in young cardiologists. At the meeting of the Districts forming the region, the city of Mar del Plata was chosen for the 2019 Meeting.

The second Regional Meeting corresponded to the Northwestern region of Argentina (Santiago del Estero, La Rioja and Tucumán) and was held in Catamarca on May 11 and 12 at Hospital San Juan Bautista. The “25 x 25 Objective” and “Heart diseases in women” were the main topics, and the activities were shared in joint roundtables with CONAREC. One hundred and seventy-five participants attended this Meeting with a high presence of nurses and technicians, in addition to community activities such as gym classes, the healthy kiosk and walks. The city of La Rioja was designated for the 2019 Meeting.

The third Regional Meeting was that of the Northeastern region of Argentina, comprising Río Paraguay, Corrientes, Chaco, Misiones and Río Uruguay Districts, and was held on June 8 and 9 at the Howard-

Johnson Hotel of Formosa. This was an International event, with the invited participation of the Paraguayan Society of Cardiology and joint roundtables with CONAREC. A total of 265 participants attended the Meeting and the community activities included a healthy diet workshop and walks. The city of Corrientes was chosen for the 2019 Meeting of this region.

The next 2018 Regional Meeting will be held in the district of Adrogué, Mendoza, including Córdoba, Bariloche and Salta.

The balance at the moment of writing this letter is highly positive, as I personally confirmed by assisting to the three Regional Meetings. The enthusiasm and energy perceived in the organizers and participants is very stimulating and predicts the success of the next Meetings. Paraphrasing the Big Bang theory, the year 2018 is the genesis and expansion of our Regional Meetings of the Argentine Society of Cardiology.

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