By definition, a Congress is a meeting of persons sharing common interests which intends to cover determined topics, presentation of studies and proposals or the exchange of ideas. A congress should provide a good occasion for the solution of pending questions in an area and should attempt to induce theoretical and practical modifications. In this specific case, it should deal with experimental and/or clinical surgery. In medicine in general and in surgery in particular, investigation cannot be absolutely divided into basic or applied research in a simplistic manner, but should be formally defined as translational. Most of the program of the SOBRADPEC Congress to be held this year in Sao Paulo will mainly involve aspects of translational surgery with the general objective of permitting professionals and students to keep up to date regarding the research lines devoted to the different experimental models that will lead to new conducts in translational surgery, promoting articulation between Science and Technology and interinstitutional interdisciplinary exchange.

Three supplements of the journal Acta Cirúrgica Brasileira will be prepared, containing full papers registered with the Congress and selected by a scientific committee for publication online. The main characteristic of the 37 articles included in these issues is their translational nature, the motto of this event chaired by Prof. Dr. Lydia Masako Ferreira and of the Supplement compiled by Prof. Dr. Saul Goldenberg, Full Professor, Paulista School of Medicine-UNIFESP and Editor of Acta Cirúrgica Brasileira. The term translational research first appeared in PubMed in 1993, sparked by the characterization of BRCA1 and other cancer genes, which suggested immediate applications in early detection and treatment of cancer. Use of the term remained low throughout the 1990s, in just a handful of papers annually, until around 2000, after which it has cropped up in several hundred articles each year. Translational research, translational medicine, translational surgery and translational science are becoming the major motto of health research at the beginning of the new century. The concept of translational research refers to any research that starts in basic science and reaches its conclusion in the practical application of the knowledge obtained. Ideas tested in clinical practice seldom become efficient from one day to the other. Future refinement is always necessary, so that clinical results also tend to return to the laboratory, in a feedback that significantly contributes to the improvement and refinement of a therapeutic strategy, completing the itinerary of a return from clinical practice to the laboratory.

The translational concept is conquering the world. There is an exponential growth of publications in medical journals in general and in surgery journals in particular. The journal Science Translational Medicine was launched in 2009 with the purpose of covering basic, translational and clinical research. There is also the Journal of Translational Medicine, side by side with other journals with a lower impact factor. But translation is gaining ground also in the area of specialties and subspecialties. The Brazilian reality does not differ from the world reality and this SOBRADPEC Congress shows that translational research, in its essence, occurs in a natural manner in our medical schools as the result of necessity and not simply as a random event. Basic research alone, as well applied research alone, no longer apply today, the former in its perspectives and the latter in its bases and precepts. The two complete each other, while at the same time merging together. For medical learning, both on the part of students and teachers, bidirectional research is richer and also more attractive, especially
for scientific initiation students who see in the practical aspect of investigation a greater wealth for their medical training.

As an example, liver transplantation, a multidisciplinary model of teaching and learning, represents a rich source of information and training ranging from anatomical research and basic education to hepatology in its farthest reaching and most varied clinical and surgical aspects. Questions of the basic area are applied to, and answered by, the clinical area and vice versa, ranging from the transplant technique to the cellular details of immunosuppression. In all surgical areas, this represents an attractive, interesting and necessary translational investigation in modern medicine used as a logical teaching method in surgery.

In view of the importance of translational medicine, the National Institute of Translational Science and Technology in Medicine (INCT-TM) was recently created in Brazil. This is a multicenter research institute financed by CNPq and located in the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, with the mission of applying the results of basic research to the clinical context, with emphasis on obtaining patents and developing products.

We believe that reading the papers published in this issue and in the other two of this Supplement trilogy will provide the dimensions of what is happening at this Congress chaired by Professor Lydia Masako Ferreira and summarized in this supplement edited by our dear Professor Goldenberg.

References