Publications in Pneumology – Old or New Ways?

Carlos Alberto de Castro Pereira¹

The lack of resources intended for higher education in the last decade followed projects clearly designed to strangle the public sector. We daily watch our colleagues' in directive positions struggling to receive grants at any cost to keep research projects going. In order to reach this goal, almost anything is valid: using the University's facilities to teach paid courses, the use of our best brains to carry out research guided by the pharmaceutical industry; trying to reach an agreement with medical groups to do exams and hospitalizations, etc.

In addition to that, the salary degradation and the lack of career opportunities prevent admitting new researchers and staff. Some seat comfortably in their "chairs" feeling privileged and comfortable as such.

In the last few years, the education budget was dictated by economic and financial international organizations, specially the World Bank, which recommends to the authorities of the so called third world countries that, in general terms, basic education should be free and college, paid. Priority must be given to basic education, which is correct. The problem is that this priority occurs mostly at the cost of college and university education. The new government seems to have put aside the idea of paid higher education. Another concept is that research is something for rich countries, which would already have material and human resources to develop it. In Brazil, only some centers with international competitiveness would be maintained. Within the core of this idea came the concept of efficiency evaluation, whose bottom line correlates costs and income. This idea is coated with modernity, where the key-words are efficiency, professionalism and competitiveness. Recently, we were appalled by a survey on the "cost" of a thesis in a well-known public university - about U\$ 8,600.00. The absurdity of this idea would require an "amazement mark", still to be invented, instead of an exclamation mark.

Another clear guideline refers to international competitiveness. In order to demonstrate efficiency and continue to receive research grants, the privileged centers must prove they have the skills to compete with other countries, and the researchers must publish their papers in journals indexed in the Medline.

Publish or perish is a mantra. The consequence is a widening of the gap – the ranking creates islands of excellence and oceans of need, and inside the island of excellence the colleagues belong to the first class (the researchers) or to the third class – the ones dedicated to the clinical practice who try to transmit their knowledge to students, residents, and even graduate students, but who at the end will have to assist their patients to survive in the future, after doing one single research in their lives - for their Theses.

The new president of CNPq has the goal of increasing the number of fellowships, reducing their individual cash values, and decentralizing them. Some resources may be allocated to clinical research, since competitiveness prioritizes the Genoma and similar projects, which consume most resources (but they are so modern...)

Researchers with international publications impress "Native Indians". The Journal of Pneumology suffers the consequences – it is put aside, whereas colleagues struggle through obscure indexed journals, seldom read. The purpose is to reach the goal – at least one paper per year. "The blow hits us harder" – replies our heroic Editor of the Journal of Pneumology. And life goes on...

A quick survey of the year 2002 shows that many colleagues prefer to publish in Brazilian journals indexed in Medline, such as the journal of the São Paulo Medical Association, or others more difficult to access, such as the Brazilian Journal of Medical and Biological Research. Some got published in better known international journals. Two or three are relevant to what matters – the clinical practice.

The Journal of Pneumology in English will soon be available in our site. A respectable Editorial Board was created. The objectives are clear – to index the Journal of Pneumology. To do that, it is necessary to break the vicious cycle and the prejudice, and to make our Pneumology more respectable, as it deserves.

REFERENCES

1. Sobrinho JD. Avaliação e privatização do ensino superior. Em: Universidade em Ruínas na República dos Professores. Helgino Trindade (Organizador). 3ª Ed. Editora Vozes, p. 61-72.