

## EDITORS' NOTE

### CRISES CAN TRIGGER CHANGE

Dear readers,

We are reaching the conclusion of this turbulent year of 2015, ending with the dramatic images of a disaster that has stained the landscapes of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo with mud. We have watched on with heavy hearts as the amber sludge has coursed down the Doce River and spread along the shores of Espírito Santo. The mid- and long-term consequences of this tragedy are hard to predict. But one way or another, it should prompt us to reflect on the economic model that involves the continuous exploitation of natural resources and the complex relationship between the state and national and transnational companies. This relationship is also submerged in a slurry of corruption that indiscriminately affects almost every political party in Brazil, even if some segments of society and the mainstream media are selective in their apportioning of blame.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Old World is suffering the consequences of the attacks that took the lives of over 130 people in Paris. They seem to result not so much from a putative “clash of civilizations” as from a sequence of regrettable actions taken by western powers, whose effects have drawn reprisals that have only ended up entrenching more deeply the bitterness and enmity they are designed to curb.

The city that suffered these attacks also received world leaders from November 30 to December 11 in a bid to hammer out a new international agreement to slow down the pace of climate change and its effects. It is hoped that the states' representatives show greater willingness to set targets that can halt the rise in the temperature of the planet and do not reproduce the failings of the Copenhagen conference in 2009. One of the most comprehensive documents about the effects of climate change in Brazil<sup>1</sup> warns of the effects that extreme weather conditions like extended droughts and heatwaves can have on health, the profile and distribution of agricultural crops, the availability of water resources, and energy and transportation infrastructure.

This December, Brazil hosts the 15th National Health Conference, of great importance in the history of public health in Brazil, which in the current circumstances is particularly important for highlighting health as a right of all citizens – contradicting the prevailing

---

<sup>1</sup> “Brazil 2040: cenários e alternativas de adaptação à mudança do clima,” available at: <http://www.sae.gov.br/imprensa/noticia/brasil-2040-cenarios-e-alternativas-de-adaptacao-a-mudanca-do-clima>.

market- and private-sector-driven trends – while also constituting a space for proposals to be made and discussions to be held as part of the overall aim to strengthen the universal access and equity of the Brazilian health system. The economic and political crisis in the country is jeopardizing some important progress seen in recent decades, including in the sphere of health. Furthermore, dengue is increasingly prevalent and has started to appear in conjunction with two other severe and less well-known diseases caused by the Zika and Chikungunya viruses. These diseases pose the primary health care system – already hampered by major structural shortfalls – with a huge challenge. As they are all transmitted by the same vector, there could be parallel epidemics of all three. The association between Zika and microcephaly in Brazil was confirmed in the last week of November.

All these crises, both local and global, and the attempts to understand and remediate them are indicative of the complexity of the dynamics in the contemporary world. In the most diverse of contexts, traditional forms of political representation have proved limited in channeling the demands of society and resolving governance-related issues.

We may be facing new problems, but we also have new tools for political and social action. The June 2013 street protests demonstrated the potential of the internet as a channel for voicing dissatisfactions, causes, debates, proposals, and concerns. Some people argue that they heralded a new kind of awareness. At the time, Jaime L. Benchimol, then science editor of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, invited professor Rosemary Segurado to brought together some experts keen to publish their reflections about what has become known as cyberactivism. The results can be read in this supplement, with articles that address the situation not only in Brazil, but also in Spain, where the galvanization of collectives via the web took shape in the political party Podemos. The contributions are all extremely relevant, since they talk about new platforms, strategies, and political figures capable of restructuring the mechanisms of debate and the ways different contemporary problems and challenges are addressed. Our ability to incorporate these new forms of action into the dynamics of the politics of representative democracy remains a moot point.

Since 2013, *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* has had an online presence in the form of a blog in Portuguese ([www.revistahcsm.coc.fiocruz.br](http://www.revistahcsm.coc.fiocruz.br)) and English ([www.revistahcsm.coc.fiocruz.br/english/](http://www.revistahcsm.coc.fiocruz.br/english/)) and Facebook and Twitter accounts. In a bid to adjust to these new times, since then we have been disseminating the content that comes out in the journal, while also featuring contemporary subjects that might have an impact on our readers. Updating the blog and the social media content are now part of the daily work of the editorial team, which counts on two competent journalists, Marina Lemle and Vivian Mannheimer. Despite the shortage of funding because of the economic crisis and the drastic austerity measures, which meant that CNPq's budget for scientific journals was cut by half, we have so far managed to cover the additional costs incurred by these new activities.

We are reaching the end of 2015 with around 4,000 followers of the Portuguese language Facebook page and just over 2,000 followers of the international page – significant figures if we recall that this is a specialized academic periodical. Of course, we would like to see these figures grow next year. To do this, we count on you, our readers, to share and “like” our postings, and also to send us your suggestions, comments, and criticisms.

Turning to our classification in international indexing agencies, we are well ranked in comparison to other Brazilian journals, but we have a long way to go before we are on a par with the leading international periodicals in the history of science, medicine, and public health.

In the new evaluation of Brazilian periodicals by Qualis-Capes, we again earned an A1 rating in the areas of history, education, and sociology, which indicates that *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* continues to be recognized as a quality journal.

For the new scientific board who took over in March 2015, this has been a year of adapting to the routines and procedures that are part and parcel of running a publishing house. It coincided with the introduction of the online submission system, ScholarOne Manuscripts, which has imposed different practices and languages than those adopted previously. We have sought to make the submission, review, and publication of articles more agile and to cover the expanding range and quantity of submissions.

The good results we attribute to this adaptation can be largely credited to the support of our readers, authors, reviewers, and the team as a whole, who have made the adaptation process far smoother. We wish everyone a restful year's end and a more hopeful 2016. Times of crisis can trigger change. So may the coming year be a truly new year!

*André Felipe Cândido da Silva*, science editor  
*Marcos Cueto*, science editor