

## GUEST EDITORS' NOTE

Dear Readers,

This special issue of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, entitled Assistance Policies in Brazil and Latin America, is largely fruit of the International Seminar on the State, Philanthropy, and Assistance, held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009 under the auspices of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation's Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Fluminense Federal University (UFF), and Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica Celso Suckow da Fonseca (Cefet-RJ; Rio's Celso Suckow da Fonseca Federal Center for Technological Education). The purpose of the event, attended by Brazilian and European researchers, was a historical discussion of health assistance from the perspectives of charity, philanthropy, and the state.

The articles published in these pages are an invitation for you, as readers, to reflect on policy, assistance, and health through some particular prisms: the relation between healthcare services and hospital architecture, the cultural dynamics involved in birthing and midwife practices and values, the development of healthcare provider identities, public policy making in regards to maternity, and the social ties between philanthropy and aid to the poor and between philanthropy and public health in the face of contagious diseases.

The issue opens with an article by Ana Paula Vosne Martins, where the author problematizes concepts recently incorporated into research in the human and social sciences, concerning the topics of assistance, benevolence and care.

Articles by Ana Teresa Venancio, Renato Gama-Rosa Costa, and Márcia Rocha Monteiro address the question of health assistance and hospital architecture. In her study of the creation of the Juliano Moreira Colony, inaugurated in 1924 in Rio de Janeiro, Venancio discusses the significance of adopting hospital colonies as the institutional model in public policy on psychiatric assistance during the first half of the twentieth century. Renato Gama-Rosa reviews studies on hospital architecture as related to health assistance, featuring some examples of hospitals and sanitariums and underscoring the link between architectural paradigms and established medical knowledge. Márcia Rocha Monteiro calls attention to another aspect of health assistance: company-built hospitals in Brazil during the Vargas era. Founded in 1941 to lend support to the sugarcane economy, one of the tasks of the Instituto do Açúcar e do Alcool (IAA; Sugar and Alcohol Institute) was to provide assistance to cane workers, and to that end the IAA built hospitals in Brazil's main sugarcane regions. Monteiro analyzes the singular features of this hospital architecture, rooted in the institute's social welfare policy.

The second line of discussions focuses on birth, midwives, and assistance. This includes an article by Tânia Maria de Almeida Silva and Luiz Otávio Ferreira on the health education of folk midwives by Brazil's Serviço Especial de Saúde Pública (Sesp; Special Public Health

Service). Sesp considered the training and subsequent supervision of these women who worked in rural Brazilian communities to be of prime importance to the success of the agency's health service projects in mother-child assistance. By virtue of the role they played within their communities, these midwives were key in the structure created by Sesp.

Karina Felitti's article examines the new forms of birthing assistance that appeared in Argentina from the 1960s through 1980s, known as painless childbirth. The author explores both resistance to these new policies and support for them in medical circles and the role played by women in a context of intense social mobilization and institutional instability. This period of turmoil in Buenos Aires' history forms the backdrop of Felitti's discussion of new forms of assistance during delivery.

Maria Soledad Zárate Campos and Lorena Godoy Catalán address the mother-child health policies enforced by Chile's National Health Service (1952-1964), especially during its earliest years. The authors point to the Service's continuities and discontinuities as regards the mother and child protection policies in force in Chile since the 1920s.

Carolina Biernat and Karina Ramacciotti's article examines maternity protection policies for Argentinean women workers in the first half of the twentieth century. Among other sources, the authors analyze the legal corpus of these policies, speeches by parliamentarians, and medical journals. They focus on the Caixa de Maternidade, founded in 1934, as well as on changes made to laws protecting women workers – as mothers or future mothers – under the first years of Peronism.

Cláudia Viscardi analyzes the various proposals for rendering assistance to the poor that were debated by intellectuals and philanthropists in Rio de Janeiro in the 1910s. The author's interest is in exploring how the main European theories on ameliorating poverty were received and adapted to local reality.

Maria Martha de Luna Freire and Vinicius da Silva Lenoy explain how Rio de Janeiro physician Arthur Moncorvo Filho put the ideals and ideas of philanthropy into practice through the Instituto de Proteção e Assistência à Infância (Child Protection and Assistance Institute), established by him in 1899. The authors highlight this doctor's role in articulating assistance activities with innovative medical practices and in proposing public policies that targeted motherhood and children.

In the realm of professions in health care and assistance, Lina Faria and Luiz Antonio de Castro Santos offer a critical analysis of care in physical therapy. The authors study the emergence of new healthcare professions and the redefinition of the field of practice in the main healthcare professions, especially within the scope of Brazil's Programa de Saúde da Família (Family Health Program). They also discuss the challenges of multi- and interdisciplinary work in health care.

Maria Itayra Padilha, Sioban Nelson, and Miriam Susskind Borenstein deliberate the role of studies on the biographies of nursing professionals as an educational and academic strategy in shaping a professional identity.

Vicente Saul Moreira dos Santos' article addresses the relation between philanthropy and public health during efforts to combat leprosy in Brazil from 1920 to 1945. The author's analysis centers on the actions of the Sociedade de Assistência aos Lázaros e Defesa Contra a Lepra (Society for Assistance to Lepers and Defense) against Leprosy,

created in São Paulo in the 1920s, and its relation with the Vargas administration, under which it lost a degree of autonomy.

In *Images*, photographic records serve to illustrate the work of the Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (Senai; National Service for Industrial Education) in Curitiba, Paraná, in the 1940s. Vera Beltrão Marques and Desirê Luciane Dominschek analyze the service's activities in the state capital, where this institution conducted a variety of assistance initiatives.

Lastly, in *Sources*, Maria Renilda Nery Barreto presents a wealthy repertoire of sources to be found at Rio de Janeiro's Pro Matre, for those interested in studying philanthropy, care during delivery, and mother-child assistance in Rio de Janeiro starting in 1918, the year the institution was founded.

In short, this special issue endeavors to provide you, readers, with the foundations for a current discussion of the topics policy, assistance, and health. We hope you enjoy it.

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