

EDITORIAL

Social Medicine/Medicina Social's 10th Issue

The Editors

The publication of the 10th issue of *Social Medicine/Medicina Social* seemed an appropriate moment for a brief report to our readers on our growth in the two and a half years since the journal's launch in May of 2006. We are proud that the journal has made progress in its goal of tearing down language barriers and creating a community across linguistic frontiers. English speakers are reading Latin American perspectives, and Latin-Americans have increased access to the work of their English speaking colleagues.

Such a report seemed opportune for several reasons. It is long-since time that we thanked the many, many people from around the world who have helped the journal in one way or another; we have made a list in the side-bar. In addition, we are beginning an application for indexing on PubMed with the National Library of Medicine. The application process has led us to review our work and we would like to share some of that review process with you, our readers. Finally, we want to share our "wish list" with you, hoping some of our readers may be able to help out with the items on this list.

What has the journal accomplished?

With this issue we have published 80 articles in the English journal and 83 in our Spanish edition; almost all articles have been published in both languages. With the exception of our last issue, the journal has been published simultaneously in both languages. As the journal has grown, most of authors have come from Latin America, a region of the world

where social medicine has seen major development since the mid seventies.

The journal seems to have found a readership in both languages. As of the end of August, 2008 there had been 38,654 articles downloaded from the journal in 2008 alone; 55% (21,425) of these were Spanish language articles. These numbers simply indicate downloads; we know that articles are often distributed in PDF format (as should be). There are currently 1,056 registered users of the journal (although registration is not required to download articles). These numbers encourage us to continue with the largely volunteer effort of putting out the journal.

They also provide evidence of what we consider to be our major accomplishment: the close working relationship between the Department of Family and Social Medicine at Montefiore/Einstein in the US and the Latin American Social Medicine Association (ALAMES). Our success to date validates a vision that international solidarity in the development of a progressive health strategy is possible and can work.

What have we struggled with?

The operational difficulties of publishing simultaneously in two languages have been daunting to us. It has been difficult for us to find translators and we have struggled to find the best way to present local articles in such a way that they are understandable and interesting to an international audience.

Our editorial processes and decisions have tended to be very slow. We have also felt our

website is not user-friendly and is not interactive enough. Fixing these issues is part of our current wish list.

Where do we go from here?

As the journal has grown, the amount of material available for publication has come to stretch our rather limited (all volunteer) resources. As we continue to grow we face several challenges:

1. Financial: It is possible to publish an on-line journal for very little money. But our translating costs average about \$3000 an issue. In addition, special projects – such as videos – are expensive. We have financing available through the end of 2009 and have just obtained not-for-profit status in the US. This will facilitate our solicitation of donations. But developing a long-term financial plan is a challenge.

2. Technical: Over the next year we hope to develop a cleaner, more user-friendly web interface that will allow us to post videos, audios, slide shows, and books. We would also like to create better venues on our site for readers to post comments and feed-back.

3. Organizational: Currently, the journal is produced by a very small group of volunteer editors and a larger group of volunteers who take on specific tasks. As we grow, we will need to develop working modalities that incorporate additional volunteers. We also need to set up a larger group to operate the journal.

4. Incorporating different languages: The journal's editors have discussed adding additional languages to the journal. At the moment there is consideration of an Arab language website publishing certain content from the Journal and soliciting submissions from Arab-speaking authors.

Thank you!

Technical assistance and web support

Danny Morrow

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[Denis Ramirez](#)

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Invited Editors/Editors

Luis Justo

Asa Cristina Laurell

Joan Paluzzi

Final thoughts

September 2008 marks the 30th anniversary of the Alma Ata Declaration. It is important to remember that the goal of "Health for All" is perfectly achievable with our current level of resources. What impedes its realization is not money, but the addiction of our rulers to war and profit. Health for All then exists as a potential, a reality impeded importantly by our primitive and anti-democratic social and political structures. It is that reality, as yet unrealized, that makes "Health for All" a goal that will not be silenced and that will find an expression in our journal.

We know that we are not alone in the struggle to develop the framework for examining health in its relation with the dynamics of society. However, we feel our vision of a multi-lingual journal dedicated to creating a broader international community is unique. This is why publishing the 10th journal almost 30 years later than the Alma Ata Declaration is so significant for us.

— The Editors

A Social Medicine

Medicina Social Wishlist

1. Obtain listing on more bibliographic indexes, including Pub Med.
2. Publish in other languages.
3. Create a website that is attractive, user-friendly and allows us to post videos, audio-tapes, books, and other media. Allow users and authors to comment on articles and give feedback to the journal.
4. Obtain assistance with creating a development plan to seek funding and a publicity strategy to better highlight the articles in the journal.
5. Streamline the process of translation.

Thank you: Copy-editors & Proof-readers

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6. Specific theme issues or articles:
 - a. How can the Alma Ata vision be realized?
 - b. How can the vision of health as a human right be made a reality?
 - c. An annual, international prize for the 10 worst drugs (based on lack of utility, inaccurate/misleading promotion, adverse effects).
 - d. Is global health a modern expression of imperialism?
 - e. Progressive health actions by cities around the world.
 - f. The political economy of health
 - g. Marxism and Health
 - h. The ABC's of Social Medicine
 - i. Building International Health Solidarity
7. Have a chance for all the editors to actually meet!

Thank you

For generosity in allowing us to reprint materials

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