

The real challenge is to publish

El verdadero reto es publicar

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Mr. Editor:
Research constitutes one of the basic functions of every health professional that is the reason why it is declared in the study syllable of the different careers of the medical sciences. Through this important training activity, the student acquires a series of essential foundations for the effective performance of his future work as a professional: the capacities of critical and self-critical analysis, to face complex situations efficiently and with a creative approach, to search for information; develops positive qualities such as: the habit of collective work, modesty, simplicity and rigor, while learning the scientific method ¹.

In Cuba there is an active student scientific movement, suppor-

ted by the hundreds of research works that are presented annually in the national forums of medical sciences developed. In addition, more than twenty students' events are held: at local, provincial, regional, national and even international scientific levels. The above allows us to infer the strength of Cuban student scientific activity; however, many of the investigations that are presented in these events are never socialized through the corresponding publication and are not use anymore ².

Unfortunately, it constitutes an international reality that, despite of the fact that students are motivated to carry out research; few of them published their work in indexed journals ³. In Cuba, the fundamental causes of this phenomenon have been cited: the absence of publication culture and restrictions on student authorship that certain national biomedical journals have ².

In order to solve the problem that constitutes the limited Cuban student scientific production, certain measures have been taken. In the II National Meeting of Scientific Publications of Health, it was approved to allow the publication of students as co-authors ⁴; nevertheless, several biomedical journals in the country already even accept the main authorship of the students. On the other hand, in recent years the creation of student scientific magazines has been stimulating, spaces for students to make the science produced by them visible.

Fortunately, in Cuba, student scientific journals have decades of history with Revista 16 de Abril and Universidad Médica Pinareña; however, projects for the development and improvement of new student publications are currently

being carried out in each University of Medical Sciences in the country.

These measures, although they are very necessary to solve the problem being addressed, the authors of this letter consider that they must be accompanied by a profound process that is capable of reversing the scarce culture of publication that exists among Cuban students of medical sciences given by, according to Paz Treto et al. ⁵, lack of advice, inexperience of how to write an article, where to publish research or little motivation to do so.

What is the use of having a greater number of magazines if articles are not written to publish on their pages? Here is the real challenge: to publish, to increase student scientific production, which at the same time will guarantee the functioning of the journals that are created.

The final step of all scientific research consists on the communication of its results through the publication of an article, since only in this way will the results obtained by the investigative process become part of scientific knowledge ⁶; an extremely important aspect that each student investigator must come to understand and put into practice.

For a student, publishing scientific articles, although it allowed him to finish the research process also helps him to develop his scientific criteria, broaden his habit of research, and even gives him satisfaction by increasing his prestige and reputation as investigator. Unfortunately, within the university, a culture of "researching ... but not publishing" seems to be established ⁷, which must be eliminated.

Some studies indicate that there are certain factors that are positively related to the fact of producing scientific articles: belonging to a

student scientific society, having adequate teaching advice or having participated in study groups⁷.

The University Student Federation (FEU in Spanish) should support this process, with the work of student scientific groups, where their members should be trained by the advisers of these groups on scientific publication issues, so that they are able to guide the rest of the students in the path of scientific production.

An effective alternative to start publishing scientific articles are letters to the editor, since these, as part of a progressive positioning strategy, allows the publication in journals as a prelude to the publication of other documents such as reviews or originals⁶.

The largest number of student scientific magazines aims to make visible the great potential of the Cuban student scientific movement; Therefore, given this increase in opportunities, it is necessary to remember that a publication, in addition to being original and relevant, must also fulfill with strict methodological, scientific and ethical standards established internationally, which should never be neglected despite a greater number of articles for publication.

The future of the Cuban medical scientific community lies in those who today are trained in the universities of medical sciences of the country, hence the options are increasing every day so that they can

fully develop research activity; So taking advantage of those opportunities is the real challenge that students face today.

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