

The role of a national scientific association of medical students: The Chilean experience

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Received: 10-12-2013.

Accepted: 24-03-2013.

El papel de una asociación científica nacional de estudiantes de medicina: La experiencia chilena

There are many reasons which biomedical research is needed, emphasizing the search for new solutions to health problems. Declining physician-scientists and need replacement has been described some years ago in countries like the United States of America (USA) and Chile (1-2). The physician-scientists have the task of linking the laboratory to clinical practice and public health. Have been reported from the undergraduate research is associated with further research in professional performance (3).

In Chile there are several initiatives to encourage research from undergraduates, which is one of the strategies described to increase the number of physician-scientists (2). In 1978 was organized the first National Scientific Congress of Medical Students of Chile (NSCMS), which has been carried out without interruption, being in charge of a different university each year. From the organization of these congresses was founded in 1994 in the city of Concepcion, the National Scientific Association of Medical Students of Chile, (Asociación Nacional Científica de Estudiantes de Medicina de Chile, ANACEM Chile), which has had from its origins as the main objective is to encourage, support and promote the development of science and research from the undergraduate medical students.

In future, this Association is responsible for the organization of congresses, events in which medical students across the country display their original scientific papers and clinical case reports, by way of sharing knowledge and enrich their medical and scientific learning. In 2004, added the Thematic Scientific Congress of Medical Students as satellite activities of the NSCMS.

In 2007 was founded the journal of the Association under the name of Revista ANACEM, with the aim to publish scientific contributions of medical students, following the editing rules of a scientific medical journal (4-5). Since then the journal has been published periodically in scope to Chile and Latin America, currently published on a quarterly basis and getting indexed in renowned databases, highlighting LILACS. In addition, the Journal has today's sponsorship of the Association of Medical Faculties of Chile.

The new project of the Association is the Multicenter Research Network, which was created with the aim of developing multicenter researches led by medical students and supported by professional researchers, to contribute to local and national knowledge.

In the rest of Latin America there are similar student associations, emerging phenomenon of empowerment and communication

between them (6). The Chilean experience shows how a student organization can help encourage research from undergraduate students to be active agents in the development of science.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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