

Editorial

Public health is nowadays defined as “The integrated social practice whose subject and object of study is the health of human populations, and it is also considered the science responsible for preventing disease, disability, prolonging life, promoting physical and mental health; through organized efforts of the community, for the sanitation of the environment and the development of the social machinery to address health problems and maintain an adequate standard of living“. it encompasses a number of issues of biological, psychological, social, cultural and environmental matters that impact the health and quality of life of human beings.¹

In this connection, this volume of *Investigaciones Andina* journal, presents a set of scientific articles regarding different public health topics such as: Analysis of mortality and morbidity of patients in an intensive care unit of a hospital in the Department of Meta, Colombia, a topic of great interest, due to its individual connotations in the health status and the economic impact on the health system. This article is complemented based on a human physiology point of view described in the research entitled “Intrapulmonary shunt, alveolar-arterial index and alveolar-arterial oxygen gradient prior non-invasive mechanical ventilation “, in which is explained the utility of these parameters in the treatment of patients with this clinical condition.

Another article establishes the characterization of the Oral Health of older adults institutionalized in three Social Protection Centers in the city of Villavicencio, this condition has a direct impact on the nutritional status of these individuals, and in many cases, it is related to the appearance of sarcopenia, which is considered at present as the biological substrate of physical frailty.

Moreover, the characterization of the nutritional status of a group of hospitalized patients in two hospital centers in the city of Villavicencio is presented and this information can be used as a baseline for further research on the relationship between the condition of the organism and the health status of the individual.

From another perspective of public health, the systematic exploratory review of the barriers for the early cervical cancer detection in Colombia, opens the door

¹ Pan American Health Organization. 2015

for the analysis of one of the situations that has the greatest impact on the health and quality of life of patients with chronic diseases, the difficulties for timely access to health services, and the need to seek solutions that guarantee compliance with the fundamental right to health.

In this volume of the journal, two issues related to infectious pathologies, which at present are a matter of concern in our country and other regions of the developing world are described through the literature review on knowledge, attitudes and practices of schoolchildren to prevent dengue fever, and the current situation of tuberculosis infection control in health institutions.

Finally, two current crucial issues of child health, which act as conditioning factors of personal development and determinants of the current situation of society are analyzed: School violence and conflict resolution through mediation, and family functionality and affective dimensions in school-going adolescents; both papers will contribute to the improvement of the understanding of underlying Socio-Health phenomena and to the implementation of solutions to improve the quality of life in this important stage of the life cycle.