



EDITORIAL

REVISTA COLOMBIANA DE OBSTETRICIA Y GINECOLOGÍA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Current trends in written media worldwide are driven by new events that began affecting our daily lives in unpredictable ways twenty years ago. At the beginning of the 90s, cell phones, the web and other technologies were already on stage helping people communicate throughout the world, and information was instantly available through mobile antennas, allowing such things as the live broadcast of the Gulf War in 1990. Also at that time, personal computers were already available to help individuals process and store large volumes of data, and mankind as a whole began to develop awareness about global warming as new evidence became available. Notwithstanding, very few people could envision the exponential growth of information and communication technologies, or the effects of global warming experienced during this century.

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, we have access to computer software and devices that allow people to communicate in real time, regardless of where they are in the world. Some of these devices are embedded in tablets and mobile phones, with their ability to download all types of information, either e-mail, written news, free encyclopedias in several languages built through worldwide collaboration, and multiple other gaming, music and video applications. These devices and applications have enabled the development of social networks, such as Wikipedia with outside editing, and Facebook, a platform for multiple applications very popular among the youth, and more recently, Twitter, very much used by politicians who send their tweets to this network of an estimated 200 million current users. These networks have gained such power that they have been used to drive massive movements, as was the case with the

Arab Spring in late 2010. Moreover, digitized images and documents are the building blocks for databases, maps and other images found in Google, for example; they make it possible to visit many places and run through history in great detail, or improve predictions about future scenarios.

Regarding global warming, temperatures observed in 2005 and 2010 have been described as the highest documented ever. One of the theories about the origin of this warming suggests that, at least in part, man is to be blamed for a phenomenon known as “climate change”. (1) Climate change has given rise to unprecedented situations such as hurricane Katrina that devastated part of the United States, the Haiyan typhoon that recently sowed destruction in the Philippines, or the Arctic ice melting. Man has also brought about deforestation, intensive grazing and increasing dependence on fossil fuels. Deforestation occurs as the frontiers are pushed by agriculture and cattle rising and by the use of wood for multiple industrial purposes, including paper, almost the only input resource for printed press and for knowledge and information storage until digital systems came about, creating new storage capabilities. These situations have triggered awareness among the world’s population about the importance of intervening the causes of climate change, and forest protection has become a priority.

In the field of health sciences, these changes are evidenced in the form of accessible, free databases that contain information about most of the scientific production in the world. Examples are the US National Medicine Library (MEDLINE), SciELO at a regional level, or private databases such as EMBASE, which can be accessed at a price. Reproducible and verifiable methods are now available that allow to

identify the specific problem to solve, search the relevant information, rate the literature, and organize the information efficiently in secondary publications such as systematic reviews (SR) (2), Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) (3) or Policy Briefs (PB). (4) These documents enable informed decision making either for individual patient care (CPG) or collective care (PB). Search engines help with the identification of these pieces of literature; these include Tripdatabase, or information summary systems that provide evidence with a critical approach to its validity such as Dynamed or Up to Date. On the other hand, there is increasing open access to individual publications, including primary studies, SR or CPG; these are all accessible at all times and from all places, using mobile phones, tablets or personal computers, with the ability to access only the required piece of information. Consequently, the use of paper publications is increasingly limited, not only due to difficult access but also because they may contain a vast amount of information of no use to the individual reader.

As a result of this situation, traditional journals have started to publish their volumes in electronic format, and there is a growing number of journals that only offer an on-line version, for example *Plos Medicine* or *BMC Medicine*. The use of web-based resources has been growing in this new century and will probably continue to grow in the future. (5)

Revista Colombiana de Obstetricia y Ginecología (RCOG) –the oldest medical journal in Colombia– has joined the world trend towards the use of electronic media. Consequently, paper circulation will be phased out. In the future, the journal will be published electronically in accordance with the Elsevier publication parameters, in order to continue to improve the scientific and editorial quality of the journal, reach a larger number of users, and contribute to the protection of our environment.

We will continue to work on our goal of being one of the best scientific journals of this country. With the support of FECOLSOG we will organize a practical workshop on systematic reviews for

authors considering that it is the most frequent type of manuscript submitted and also considering that RCOG's editorial policy is to give priority to reviews that follow a verifiable, reproducible and low bias-risk methodology. Narrative reviews will only be published at the request of the editorial committee. The membership of the committee has also been expanded to include two well-known members of our specialty. Doctors Andrés Rubio Romero and Carlos Grillo Ardila have joined as associate editors in order to provide greater support to the authors and expedite the publishing process.

We are moving into a period of transition and apologize in advance to our readers for any inconveniences caused by potential difficulties that we may have to overcome as we face this new challenge of providing access to potential users to a publication of the highest scientific and editorial quality consistent with new world trends.

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Editor

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