

“The international relations of Scientific Societies. Gratifying experiences”

The kind invitation from the Brazilian Spine Society (Sociedade Brasileira de Coluna - S.B.C.) and from the editorial board of the “Coluna/Columna” journal, an opportunity for which we are truly grateful, allows us to reach Brazilian spinal surgeons with a brief summary of the history of the Portuguese Society of Spinal Pathology (Sociedade Portuguesa de Patologia da Coluna Vertebral - S.P.P.C.V.), which is a product of the desire for concerted approaches among countless orthopedists and neurosurgeons about nine years ago; it also allows us to bring to the attention of the Brazilian medical community involved in spinal pathology aspects of the Portuguese scientific production publicized at the Congress of Monte Real, Leiria, Portugal in March 2012 and especially to reaffirm the consideration and bonds of friendship that we owe the various members of the Brazilian Spine Society with whom we have interacted closely and built solid foundations of cooperation, I would even say a unification of experiences and expectations, which, not least due to the coincidence of language and culture, augurs a promising future.

Everyone would agree that the professional life of any physician is replete with gratifying situations, in human, technical and scientific terms. Indeed, we do not exhaust our professional duties when providing care to our patients, who according to Hippocrates, are of the utmost importance; membership in scientific societies translates the concern with keeping ourselves up to date through listening and discussion with our peers, in a logic of continuing education, in order for us to practice Medicine that respects the “state of the art”. And this respect for technical and scientific development as an indispensable means of treating patients better certainly formed the basis of the creation of any Scientific Society, as was the case of S.P.P.C.V.

An interesting article, published in 1944 in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, which we had access to through a friend and orthopedist colleague, is a true source of inspiration for us. Written by Alan Smith and collaborators (New York Orthopedic Dispensary and Hospital), it presents outcomes of surgical treatment of 100 cases of herniated lumbar disc, arguing that “. . . We believe that all cases of sciatica should be studied by a neurosurgeon and an orthopedist, working together as a team, each one familiar with and empathetic toward each other’s point of view.” This is still true 68 years later! This view is so appropriate that as a natural development, it resulted in the irreversible expansion of the presence of spinal surgeons.

This also happened in Portugal: November 21, 2003 is the date of the formal establishment of S.P.P.C.V., a result of the efforts of a group of orthopedists and neurosurgeons who uphold this common concept and who, enlarging the scope, agreed to extend participation in the Society to clinicians specializing in other areas, namely Neuroradiology, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Rheumatology.

To begin with, the first governing bodies established a protocol of cooperation with the SBC, which was a wise and visionary decision, responsible for a partnership that has proved extremely gratifying. Personally, as members of the board of the Portuguese Society of Neurosurgery, we had experienced the reciprocal virtues and advantages of the establishment of close relations with national, continental and intercontinental scientific societies, and also in that case, prioritizing Brazilian societies with consolidated success. It is now a common saying that the South Atlantic no longer constitutes the barrier of the past and that communication via web brings us close to one another whenever we want to. This is true and we endorse it!

With these assumptions, there is immense room for cooperation in the sphere of the partnership with SBC and is worked on within the realm of possibility by the governing bodies of both societies, reciprocally providing the means available to them. And herein lies the gratifying result of relations between scientific societies regardless of their size, resources and influence, it directs them to add efforts to ensure the best education and updating of their members and consequent repercussions on the wellbeing of the communities in which they are present.

Let us continue.

On behalf of S.P.P.C.V., we wish S.B.C. and its illustrious members every success.