

## Some aspects of teaching at IMIP

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The Instituto Materno Infantil Prof. Fernando Figueira (IMIP) has, since its foundation in 1960 by Prof. Fernando Figueira, had the institutional mission of providing the highest quality teaching, in association with research and healthcare and in a manner that is appropriate to the local situation. The institution was the brainchild of the educator, Professor Fernando Figueira, who believed that good quality medical teaching was necessarily linked to providing good medical care. This was not the case in the 1950s, in the buildings of the now hundred-year-old Hospital Pedro II - the Clinical Hospital of the Federal University of Pernambuco of the time, which is, currently, by coincidence, undergoing substantial restoration under the auspices of the IMIP itself, with a view to extending its current area of coverage of the health needs of the mother and child to those of the family as a whole. However, health care for children, in the 1950s at Hospital Pedro II was limited, with some children being treated alongside adults.

With the IMIP and its founder, a new pediatric school emerged in the Northeast region of Brazil. It was innovative, pioneering and an example to all with its highest of ethical principles. Since it opened its doors, the IMIP Pediatric General Hospital has kept up its unequivocal commitment to teaching. It has been receiving students since 1961, when Prof. Fernando Figueira took over the chair of pediatric medicine at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) and his students started to frequent the IMIP in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> years of their medical training. Shortly afterwards, the IMIP also took on students from the Faculty of Medical Sciences, which is now

the University of Pernambuco (UPE), when Prof. Fernando Figueira started to teach at this medical school. By the 1960s, the IMIP began its important contribution to teaching in other areas of medicine, when it began to receive students in physiotherapy, nursing, occupational therapy, nutrition and dentistry. At present, the IMIP receives more than 1,000 undergraduate students each year, coming from local schools and other states. In medicine alone it has 500 individuals studying for a doctorate each year.

One of the IMIP's main teaching programs is its residency, a *latu sensu* post-graduate diploma based on the pedagogical principle of "learning by doing". This began in 1966, with just one resident doctor, a number which rose to four in the subsequent year. Since then, IMIP, with its as always unflappable commitment to teaching, has invested heavily in building up this program, with partnerships with the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) and the Josiah Marie Foundation, a US organization that financed the residency program from 1967 to 1972. In 1968, the institution began program in pediatric surgery, an area in which it was one of the pioneers in Brazil. With the setting up by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) of the National Medical Residency Commission, in the 1970s, the IMIP's pediatric medicine program was the first in the Northeast region to receive recognition. This recognition greatly increased the number of doctors from other States in the Northeast region coming to the institutions and, ever since, a large contingent of each year's intake is composed of doctors from other States in the region. During this period, the program

also enjoyed the participation of illustrious visiting professors in the area of pediatric medicine, both from Brazil and from overseas. These included Artur Abali, César Pernetta, and Renato Woski, who acted for months as veritable "resident professors" at the hospital. In the following decades, the program continued to expand, both in the area of medicine with the creation of new specializations (plastic surgery, anesthesia, tocogynecology, oncology, fetal medicine, radiology and image diagnostics, family and community medicine, clinical medicine, general surgery, otorhinolaryngology, R3 in neonatology, and pediatric cardiology and nephrology), and in other areas, such as nursing and nutrition. All of this has helped to make the IMIP residency program one of the largest in Brazil, with a current total of more than 220 residents and 520 preceptors.

*Strictu sensu* post-graduate courses were introduced in 1973, with the Masters in Pediatric Medicine, which arose as a result of the development of teaching and learning in the institution, in partnership with the UFPE. In 1993, the IMIP set up its own independent Masters course in Maternal and Children's Health, being at the time the first post-graduate program in this area in Brazil. As of today, the IMIP has awarded more than one hundred masters degrees, around 20% of these being to health professionals to other States in the Northeast of Brazil. These professionals now exercise a leadership role in teaching, research and healthcare management. It should be pointed out that IMIP has also provided assistance for Portuguese-speaking African nations, whose doctors and nurses have received Masters degrees and worked as interns at the institution. Teaching staff from the IMIP have also given advice to African doctors in the areas of teaching, healthcare and healthcare management. Last year, the IMIP finished building up *its strictu sensu* post-graduate school with the introduction of a doctoral program in maternal and children's health, as previously approved by the Coordinating Body for the Training of Higher Education Staff (CAPES).

Another important aspect of the institution's teaching work has been the publication of teaching materials and technical and scientific works. This began with the standardization of medical conduct at the end of the 1960s, and resulted in the institution's first publication: "A Treatment and Diagnosis Manual". At present, the IMIP has more than 30 publications, including teaching/training materials and technical and scientific works. The IMIP's textbook on pediatric medicine, "Fernando Figueira - Pediatric Medicine", is at present the most sought-after book in this area in medical schools in the

Northeast region of Brazil. This year alone, three new books are still to be published: "The Pediatric Intensive Care Unit", "The Pediatric Outpatients Clinic" and "The Prevention of Adult Diseases in Childhood and Adolescence", the latter written by the IMIP teaching team in collaboration with the University of São Paulo (USP).

The IMIP's professional training in the 1960s and 1970s was strongly focused on training on pediatric medicine, producing general practitioners with excellent human skills who are able to deal with the main health problems found among children and have good knowledge of the local environment. Then, in the 1980s, this training, which was always of the highest ethical caliber, was extended to health professionals who treat women. This challenge was also overcome in an institution that has already delivered almost 100,000 babies and provided post-graduate training for more than 300 tocogynecologists. The challenge now is to expand care to the family as a whole, including clinical and surgical medicine for adults. The bases for this have already been put down and the IMIP has the largest hospital unit in the Northeast region of Brazil, with a built area of 20,000m<sup>2</sup> (set to rise to 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> when the restoration of the Hospital Pedro II is complete) and more than 600 beds. The medical residency programs in clinical medicine and surgery were started this year. More than 50 IMIP teachers are at present attending Masters or Doctorate courses, some of these outside Brazil.

The IMIP also conducted a pioneering experiment with the Specialization Course in Pediatric Medicine, between 1986 and 1989. This course is not limited only to medicine, but has components involving sociology, anthropology and political science, among others recommended according to the principles of the educator, Fernando Figueira, of fully addressing the underlying causes of disease and humanizing the act of providing medical care.

The educator, Fernando Figueira, always dreamt of a graduate medical school. At the school he was talking about, thirty years ago, there are many new projects that aim to review the teaching of medicine in Brazil. This would be a kind of teaching whereby the student has contact with the patient from the very first day of classes, would get to know the patient's family, home and style of life, and thereby better understand both the patient and the disease. When treating, for example, a patient with a particular disease, infectious diarrhea in children, for example, the medical student with study not only the biochemical mechanisms necessary for understanding metabolic disorders, but also epidemiology, clinical

medicine, nutrition, bacteriology, and the living conditions of the child's family by way of a visit to the patient's. This kind of teaching would be almost "Hippocratic", with classes of around 40 students. The students would be selected not by their results in end-of-school examinations, but through observation of their behavior, attitudes and conduct in the course of a six-month probationary period. The students identified by the preceptors and by the students themselves as having a vocation for medicine would be allowed to continue the course.

The IMIP is one of the institutions in Brazil that has contributed most to teaching in the area of health care in the last few decades, both in quantitative terms (with thousands of health professionals receiving some form of training) and in terms of the quality of its innovations and pioneering teaching methods, which have always been student-centered and given priority to the patient and clearly set in their local historical, social, cultural, economic and geographical context.

**Key words** *Teaching, Research, Maternal-Child Health Services*

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