

In memoriam

Magda Heras i Fortuny, an Indelible Imprint on *Revista Española de Cardiología*



Our Editor-in-Chief, Magda Heras, died August 3rd, 2014, at 61 years of age. Magda was born on June 29, 1953, in Terrassa (Barcelona Province, Catalonia, Spain). She studied Medicine at the University of Barcelona (1972–1978), and completed residencies in Internal Medicine (*Hospital Mútua de Terrassa*) and Cardiology (*Hospital Clínic de Barcelona*). In 1986, she received her PhD from the University of Barcelona. The next two and a half years were spent as a research fellow at the Mayo Clinic Arteriosclerosis and Thrombosis Laboratory in Rochester, Minnesota, United States. Upon her return to Spain, she joined the Department of Cardiology, *Hospital Clínic de Barcelona*, where she developed the rest of her clinical and research career in cardiology. The fruits of her intense research activity are evident in her extensive curriculum vitae: she published 200 articles and 27 book chapters and supervised 7 doctoral theses (dissertations). In 2005, she became an Associate Professor of Cardiology at the University of Barcelona. She also maintained a very active collaboration with the European Society of Cardiology and participated in several working groups (Acute Cardiac Care, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology, and Cardiovascular Pharmacology). She was already Editor of *Revista Española de Cardiología* (Rev Esp Cardiol) Supplements when, in October 2009, she was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the journal, representing a shift in her professional life. Much of her time was devoted to Rev Esp Cardiol during her final years.

When Magda accepted the role of Rev Esp Cardiol Editor-in-Chief, the journal was at an excellent point in its history. As a result of the excellent work of the preceding editorial teams, its impact factor had reached a historical high (2.880 in the 2008 edition of *Journal Citation Reports*). The main challenge was to maintain this position and, as far as possible, improve it. Only too aware that, for all its limitations, a journal's impact factor is its "calling card", Magda implemented measures to strengthen this indicator, which increased to 3.342 in the 2013 edition of *Journal Citation Reports* and positioning Rev Esp Cardiol in the upper range of the second quartile of cardiovascular journals.

Without discounting the importance of impact factor, other aspects of a scientific journal are of equal or greater relevance. One of the aspects most appreciated by authors is the speed with which an article progresses through the editorial system. Today, an article receives an initial review within 2 weeks and the average time from receipt to a first decision is 15 days. Both the journal's reviewers and

associate editors are evidently doing good work. This is due in part to how Magda transmitted her leadership style to us. She made all of us—reviewers and editors—feel involved in the journal. She came up with the idea of sending each of us a personalized annual report of our Rev Esp Cardiol timelines, which undoubtedly strengthened our commitment to our journal.

One of Magda's priority objectives was to improve the journal's print and electronic publication process, which became an almost personal challenge. Thanks to her determination, the journal's design was changed, Rev Esp Cardiol began ahead-of-print publication, production times were shortened, the website was redesigned, and its content was expanded. In particular, the quality and speed of the journal's translation to English, which she defined, graphically, as "our showcase to the world", became her obsession. The fruit of her struggle in this arena is that Rev Esp Cardiol is no longer a journal with two versions, Spanish and English, published at different times and is now a simultaneously bilingual journal in MEDLINE/PubMed, with a high-quality English edition with an increasing growth in website traffic and articles downloaded in Spanish and English.

Another of her basic objectives was Rev Esp Cardiol national and international visibility. Magda actively participated in the annual meetings of international editors' networks: the *Red de Editores de Revistas Cardiovasculares Iberoamericanas*, the National Societies Cardiovascular Journals Editors' Network of the European Society of Cardiology, and the HEART Group. She strengthened a continuing education course offered by the Spanish Society of Cardiology, entitled "The scientific article: from the author to the reader", and introduced an annual congress workshop on "What you should know before writing a scientific article", a session on the best articles published by our journal during the previous year, and a joint session with *European Heart Journal* editors.

As part of the pragmatism that so characterized Magda, she was sensitive to the present economic crisis but aware that profitability was difficult for an educational tool like Rev Esp Cardiol. Beginning in September 2012, the print journal became available only in black and white, with color available in the electronic format; the number of printed copies was reduced (after consulting society members); the electronic version was strengthened; articles from the "Current Topics" special issue were incorporated into regular issues; and non-members were required to pay to download articles for the first 6 months after print publication.

In September 2009, Magda called each of us to ask us to join her team of editors. All of us agreed, having no idea how to properly assess what this would mean for our professional and personal lives. We cannot find the words to thank her for this opportunity. From our relationship with her, we have extracted the following concepts that she applied with incomparable mastery:

Listen. Magda listened. In editorial meetings, she solicited the opinion of each person, ensuring that each of us had a chance to speak, before she expressed her own opinion. This facilitated an open forum for discussion and the involvement of everyone as a group.

Decide. Magda decided. Polemical situations or difficult decisions, which we colloquially called (in English) the "hot potatoes", are

frequent in the daily activities of a scientific journal. Magda listened but made a decision. Although she was a realist and understood any possible point that could be considered, decisions had to be made. She took all relevant precautions and advice and, in the end, decided. She knew better than anyone how to combine a conciliatory “left hand” with an executive “right hand.”

Lead. Magda was our leader. The leadership role is not conferred by a title, in this case Editor-in-Chief, but rather by moral authority conferred by a group of collaborators. A person who listens and makes informed decisions is guaranteed this moral authority.

Build friendships. Magda knew how to foster friendship and group dynamics better than anyone. Any excuse was welcomed to strengthen friendships (eg, informal lunch at the *Casa del Corazón* after our meetings, annual dinner at the Spanish Society of Cardiology Congress, the gift of a classical music CD at Christmas).

Perhaps the word that best defines Magda is equilibrium. Magda understood balance. We have described how she combined concepts that could seem to be in opposition and made them complementary:

listen/decide or left hand/right hand. About two years ago, she sent an e-mail informing us of her terrible diagnosis. Once again, she found a balance between fatalism and optimism. We have no doubt that Magda was aware from the very beginning that her diagnosis was fatal, but her attitude was optimistic: she would fight the disease. This was not naïve optimism. Magda was not naïve; she was rational. Greater balance and pragmatism would be impossible. She battled her disease with admirable common sense and fulfilled her Rev Esp Cardiol duties to the end because, fortunately, she remained able to do so.

Magda has left us with an empty/full feeling, another sense of balance: empty, because she will be irreplaceable; full, because her legacy and commitment to Rev Esp Cardiol will last forever. On behalf of Eva, Iria, María, Pablo, Toni, Leo, and Juan, many thanks for your efforts and for the opportunity to have worked with you all these years. Your excellent work will endure.

Rest in peace.

Juan Sanchis, Pablo Avanzas, Antoni Bayes-Genis,
and Leopoldo Pérez de Isla
Associate Editors, Revista Española de Cardiología