

Letter to the Editor

CONAREC: 40 years of a very special society



CONAREC: 40 años de una sociedad científica especial

To the Editor,

In 1980, while Argentina was in the midst of huge political and economic conflict, a group of cardiology residents, unhappy with the lack of standardized training they were receiving, decided to join forces to improve the situation. They organized a meeting with talks given by residents and supervised by local experts. Thus was

born the first Inter Residents Cardiology Conference in Argentina (figure 1), the impact of which surpassed the expectations of its organizers. The following year, this conference was repeated with greater participation from both attendees and training centers. It then became necessary to organize a coordinated effort to plan future activities. In 1982, a resident was elected president of this new institution, which in April 1983 obtained legal status. Thence was born the Argentinian Council of Cardiology Residents (CONAREC, by its initials in Spanish), a scientific society formed exclusively by residents, with positions elected annually by peers, and whose membership spans residents' training period. So, when



Figure 1. Poster from the first Inter Residents Cardiology Conference, in 1980.

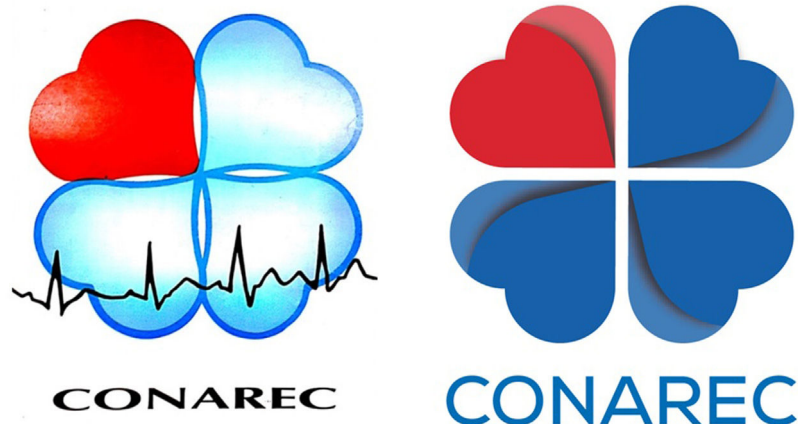


Figure 2. On the left, the original logo of the Council; on the right, the updated logo in 2015, at the 30th anniversary of the CONAREC journal.

the new cardiologists finish their training, they stand down from their active role with CONAREC, although they often continue in a supportive or advisory role for the new generations.

In 1985, CONAREC founded its own journal, which, similarly to the Council, is made up of and led completely by residents. The journal publishes 5 issues annually, and has done so without interruption since its creation, allowing many residents to disseminate the results of their first research projects. In 2014, in recognition of its achievements and scientific rigor, the journal began the process of indexing in various Latin-American databases; this continues to the present day.

When it started, the Council also created a logo: a 4-leaf clover, with each leaf in the shape of a heart, superimposed with an electrocardiogram (figure 2).¹

In the early 1990s, CONAREC began to create national registries of different diseases, and to date has created 20 of these.¹ More recently, some of its published studies have achieved international importance.² Furthermore, the Council has developed and published 2 books on cardiovascular recovery and echocardiography, with a third, on the coronary care unit, in press. Surveys have also been carried out, of particular note are those looking at the academic and working conditions of residents,³ and analysis of their lifestyle and habits.¹ In addition, CONAREC offers ongoing training activities for its members, and in 2018 was able to set up its first virtual course, enabling even residents from other countries to participate.¹

As more and more residents joined CONAREC, new activities were organized. Worthy of mention was a series of activities for the community that took place between 2010 and 2013 in Humahuaca, a rural settlement with few economic resources and little medical access, where various health promotion activities were carried out.¹

Finally, the Inter Residents Cardiology Conference, which laid the foundations for the formation of the Council, has continued to develop until the present day, rotating sites through different cities in Argentina, and this year marked its 40th anniversary. Despite its exponential growth, its essence remains the same. Currently, participants in the conferences include residents from Uruguay, Mexico, Paraguay, and Chile, and this year residents from Spain

joined. In this spirit, and with the aim of tightening links between medical trainees in the region, in 2018 the first collaborative survey of residents was carried out in these countries, regarding smoking cessation.⁴

We are proud to celebrate another Council anniversary, and see how this utopian dream of a group of residents was able to generate a scientific society that has achieved great things. Furthermore, we would like to express our deep thanks to all the members, past and present, of CONAREC, as their selfless work has allowed our institution to develop. We hope that in the years to come, the collective work of cardiology residents from Ibero-American countries will transcend borders, as this will be essential for our specialty to truly advance.

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Available online 11 March 2021

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