

SPECIAL ARTICLE

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A review of a management experience of the Peruvian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology

A propósito de una experiencia de gestión de la Sociedad Peruana de Obstetricia y Ginecología

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ABSTRACT

Medical societies usually have as their mission and vision the improvement of their members' competencies and therefore academic activities are usually the most important objective. The Sociedad Peruana de Obstetricia y Ginecología (SPOG) is an academic institution, but it has become a reference for women's health and is part of the Advisory Group of the Ministry of Health; it promotes and defends public policies for the benefit of sexual and reproductive health, recently promoting the vaccination of pregnant women against COVID-19 and reducing maternal deaths. In 2023, SPOG defends women's right to emergency contraception before the Constitutional Court and therapeutic abortion before the Supreme Court of Justice. In addition, the Peruvian Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics (RPGO, for its acronym in Spanish) has been published since 1955 and with the support of the different SPOG boards has recently been indexed in Scopus. In reviewing the latest Strategic Plan 2022-2026, SPOG can be considered a modern academic society that seeks to be self-sustainable through the implementation of projects with external cooperation and with the support of the associates and a modern transparent and efficient administration. Current and future medical societies not only conduct the scientific academic activity of their specialty but also participate in public health policies in the area of their competence.

Key words: Scholarly society, modern, Sexual and reproductive health policy

RESUMEN

Las sociedades médicas usualmente tienen como misión y visión la mejora de competencias de los asociados y por ello las actividades académicas suelen ser la finalidad más importante. La Sociedad Peruana de Obstetricia y Ginecología (SPOG) lo hace también, pero en el país se ha constituido referente de la salud de la mujer y es parte del grupo asesor del Ministerio de Salud; promueve y defiende políticas públicas en beneficio de la salud sexual y reproductiva, con impulso reciente de la vacunación de las gestantes contra el COVID-19 que permitió reducir las muertes maternas. En el año 2023, la SPOG defiende el derecho de las mujeres a la anticoncepción de emergencia ante el Tribunal Constitucional y del aborto terapéutico ante la Corte Suprema de Justicia. Además, se publica desde el año 1955 la Revista Peruana de Ginecología y Obstetricia (RPGO) que, con el apoyo de las diferentes directivas de la SPOG, ha logrado recientemente su indexación a Scopus. Al revisar el último Plan Estratégico 2022-2026, la SPOG puede ser considerada una sociedad académica moderna que busca ser autosostenible mediante la ejecución de proyectos con la cooperación externa y de organismos internacionales y con el apoyo de los asociados y una administración moderna transparente y eficiente. Las sociedades médicas actuales y del futuro no solo conducen la actividad académica científica de su especialidad, sino también participan en las políticas públicas de salud del área de su competencia.

Palabras clave. Sociedad académica moderna, Políticas de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva

INTRODUCTION

Trying to find a cure for diseases has been a challenge since the beginning of mankind. This work, which with much empiricism was often performed individually, has been transformed with the advance of scientific knowledge, and professionals acquire their expertise in universities, hospitals, and other institutions. This evolution of less individual medicine has resulted in the formation of groups of professionals who, through medical associations or societies, share medical science, advances, and errors.



With the advance of scientific knowledge, each branch of medicine has its own society where they speak with specific technicalities and issues of their community. Currently, the problem is not the absence of societies, but the many societies grouped in associations⁽¹⁾. Few of them have achieved self-sustainability, with adequate infrastructure and equipment, and play an important role in the public health policies of their countries. The mission of our Academic Societies or Federations in Latin America should be to change the paradigm and move towards being a modern medical society. Our countries require it.

AN ACADEMIC SOCIETY WITH A MODERN APPROACH

Being a modern academic society has been the challenge of the Peruvian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (SPOG) in recent years. An important arm of the Peruvian Medical College, SPOG was founded on June 30, 1947, with Dr. Constantino T. Carvallo as its first President. It has been 76 years, and thanks to the work of the Boards of Directors of its 75 presidents, our Society has not only strengthened but, responding to the strategic plans developed since 2006⁽²⁾, has increased its dissemination of knowledge in gynecology and obstetrics through scientific meetings or webinars, congresses and national and international conferences with self-financing activities and national and international agreements. It also participates in public policies on sexual and reproductive health for the benefit of Peruvian and Latin American women, showing the scientific production through the Peruvian Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics (RPGO), with a modern administration and its own infrastructure. This has allowed our Society to be a national reference in gynecology and obstetrics in Peru.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF A MODERN ACADEMIC MEDICAL INSTITUTION

The management of a modern academic medical society must have as its main basis the leadership of the president and his council or board of directors, who fulfill what the Society has determined in its strategic plan, a fundamental tool of institutional management that determines the mission and vision of the Society in the following years. The latest SPOG Strategic

Plan 2022-2026⁽³⁾ was elaborated with the full and associate members who outlined the route that SPOG's directives are committed to follow in the immediate future.

These academic societies require modern administration to meet legal requirements, fixed asset inventories, internal and external audits. They will have the necessary permits, municipal and equipment licenses, and will be up to date with the corresponding tax payments. It has been established as SPOG's institutional policy to audit each fiscal year and that the annual approval of the financial statements by the Board of Directors is based on duly audited accounting information. SPOG executed annual audits between 2018 and 2022 by a prestigious company, which resulted in clean, unqualified opinions. And the physical taking of inventories of all institutional fixed assets in its two locations is performed at least with the renewal of each Board of Directors every two years.

The recent incorporation of an institutional e-mail as a tool for communication and exchange of official information among the people of the institution for SPOG purposes has a significant importance as an institutional image.

The 2021-2022 management of SPOG has culminated with fully updated and audited financial statements. The 2022 annual affidavit has been complied with within the deadlines established by the National Superintendency of Tax Administration (SUNAT, by its Spanish acronym). In addition, employment contracts with personnel, third party contractors, operating permits, administrative processes, and current legal requirements are fully up to date, with no possibility of observation. All this has been possible thanks to the work of the entire Board of Directors, the permanent support of the Past Presidents, the membership, and the administrative staff of the Institution.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PRESTIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

Every modern academic society should have a prestigious journal that shows the scientific production of its associates and related scientists and disseminates the advances that are produced on a daily basis.



The Peruvian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology publishes since 1955 the Peruvian Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics (RPGO), an academic-scientific reference at national and international level^(4,5). Its Editor is Dr. José Pacheco, Scientific Editor is Dr. Luis Távara⁽⁶⁾ and the same Editorial Committee has been working for the last 30 years. A total of 69 volumes have been produced, with all articles digitized in the Open Journal System (OJS) since the first issue of the Journal⁽⁷⁾, contributing significantly to the dissemination of scientific knowledge of the specialty in its 58 years of creation.

The RPGO is indexed in Scielo, ESCI WOS, REDIB, Dialnet, MIAR, EuroPub, DOAJ, HINARI, Redalyc, IMBIOMED, Latindex, LILACS, LIPECS and, this year, has achieved indexing in Scopus⁽⁸⁾.

Although the success of the RPGO lies in the dedicated and permanent work of the editors together with the Editorial Committee, this would not be possible without the permanent support of all the SPOG boards of directors, who understood the importance of the RPGO and have supported its financing. Currently, the journal is working both on further professionalization to maintain its quality and on its sustainability through the permanent search for funding.

SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

Modern academic societies must have an annual plan of scientific meetings⁽⁹⁾ that include scientific sessions, conferences, and national and international congresses. SPOG has fulfilled these activities despite the pandemic, exceeding expectations. The average number of scientific sessions in the pre-pandemic years was 12-14 sessions per year. The average number of scientific sessions between April and November of the years 2021-2022 was one scientific session per week, with an average of 35 sessions per year. There was a minimum participation of 200-300 people per session, with some reaching up to 700 participants. Undoubtedly, virtuality has helped to bring knowledge to a greater number of medical specialists, especially in the interior of the country and abroad.

Regarding the International Conference in 2021 and the Peruvian Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 2022, they were academically, scien-

tifically and economically successful. The average attendance of the international conferences is 800 and that of the congresses exceed one thousand participants. The income from these events has contributed to the acquisition of institutional premises in 1994 (XI Peruvian Congress and VII Bolivarian Journey 1993) and 2021 (XXIII Peruvian Congress 2021). In recent years, the events have been face-to-face and virtual, achieving similar profitability to previous years.

PARTICIPATION IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH POLICIES

Modern academic societies bring together the best specialists in a given medical area, in the case of SPOG Peruvian obstetricians and gynecologists, and also have the responsibility to participate in proposals for sexual and reproductive health policies and their defense when they affect women of all ages.

SPOG has managed to become a technical advisor to the Ministry of Health, the most relevant referent in sexual and reproductive health issues of the Peruvian Medical Association, to issue related public pronouncements and to participate in the calls of the Congress of the Republic and the media in the need to defend the health of women in the country.

In the last administration of SPOG, immunization of pregnant women was promoted for the prevention of COVID, which was causing maternal deaths, achieving a drastic decrease in the number of deaths^(10,11). Likewise, in 2022 and 2023, before the Constitutional Court of Peru, the right of women to the use of emergency oral contraception in public hospitals in the country was defended by means of an Amicus Curie and the participation in person before the Court. Before the Supreme Court of Peru, it contributed to the defense of therapeutic abortion in the country. These are examples of the strengthening of SPOG's prestige, in both cases with positive results.

SPOG also participates in the advisory committee and in the committee of experts on immunizations of the Peruvian Ministry of Health (MINSA, for its acronym in Spanish), having managed to incorporate new vaccination schedules in pregnant women and in relation to the human papilloma virus (HPV).



LINKS WITH INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS

It is important for modern societies to belong to the most important international organizations related to their specialty. SPOG belongs to the following scientific institutions:

International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), founded in 1954 by representatives of 42 national member Societies of Obstetrics and Gynecology. It grew out of a growing international movement to share knowledge and align best practices in an ever-changing world of health care and human rights. SPOG is one of 132 societies that belong to FIGO. Each member society is committed to ensuring that the world's women achieve the highest standards of physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health and well-being throughout their lives⁽¹²⁾.

The Latin American Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecology Societies (FLASOG) was founded in 1952 by gynecology and obstetrics associations, societies and federations from the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. It is currently comprised of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela⁽¹³⁾. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), founded in 1951, is a professional association of physicians specializing in obstetrics and gynecology in the United States that has among its members some Latin American countries. Peru, through SPOG, is one of them⁽¹⁴⁾.

The Spanish Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics (SEGO), founded in 1874, changed to its current name in 1987. In 2005 it named SPOG as a Sister Society and its respective associates have the category of corresponding members.

SELF-SUSTAINABILITY AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

One of the major concerns of modern academic societies is financial. Most institutions rely on membership dues and support from pharma-

ceutical and related companies for their various national and international academic activities. Societies must maintain independence between institutional objectives and those of pharmaceutical and other corporate sponsors. Self-financing facilitates this independence, which is obtained with the punctual payment of all its members, a difficult task, or with the development of projects, and even with the payment of membership of some members or selected companies through the financing of their own projects.

Since 2005, SPOG has been developing projects financed by the following international organizations:

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) developed the 'Emergency Oral Contraception' project in 11 regions of the country: 2005-2006.

International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), three projects have been developed: 'Active management of the third stage of labor' at the national level: 2005-2006; 'Saving lives of mothers and newborns' in Chulucanas-Morropón in the Piura Region: 2006-2010; 'Advocacy for therapeutic abortion' at the national level: 2019-2022.

Planned Parenthood Global (PPG), since 2017 has been developing the project 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Training' in priority areas of Peru, which will conclude in August 2024.

Latin American Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecology (FLASOG) is implementing the project "Clarification of values" for training in relation to women's sexual and reproductive health rights, to raise awareness among specialists in gynecology and obstetrics in Peru.

Subsequent efforts are expected to raise funds for the development of new projects in the various regions of the country.

Between 2005 and 2012 some companies, such as Kimberley Clark, Lazo de Vida, Personal Products SA and others obtained SPOG membership while respecting the legal ethical framework. It is a strategy that can give good results and should continue to be explored.



CONCLUSION

In our countries, the Societies or Federations that have the necessary mission to improve the competences of their professionals in response to the challenges of past centuries, should move forward and change paradigm. At present, with the improvement in management capacities achieved, many Latin American societies and federations should propose strategic plans with institutional vision to be a Modern Academic Society, with participation in sexual and reproductive health policies, seeking institutional self-sustainability, as they do in Canada (SCOG), USA (ACOG), Spain (SEGO) and others that are self-sustainable and even finance projects to improve women's health. The support of pharmaceutical institutions and other related products will not be left aside, but the negotiation would be done in a better position, maintaining academic independence.

The Peruvian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology advances to be a modern academic society, and the last management of the period 2021-2023 has demonstrated this.

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