



LIFESTYLE MEDICINE IN LATIN AMERICA

MEDICINA DEL ESTILO DE VIDA EN LATINOAMÉRICA

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It is a pleasure to start the year 2022 with the special edition of the first issue of our journal dedicated to "Lifestyle Medicine in Latin America". The growth of this new medical discipline at a global level, considered as the seventh era of public health, with a level of scientific evidence that positions it as one of the areas of greatest production and publications at an international level. Only in PubMed there are more than 60 thousand indexed articles.

Since 2014 we have been working to seed and promote "Lifestyle Medicine in Latin America". Several activities and undertakings were developed and seminars, conferences, symposiums, national and regional congresses were organized in Latin America with the participation of more than 13 countries. The first society established in the region was the Latin American Lifestyle Medicine Association, which later facilitated and supported organizations in various countries from Mexico to Argentina. Various educational activities with organizations such as AMFEM (Asociación Mexicana de Facultades y Escuelas de Medicina), ALAFEM (Asociación Latinoamericana de Facultades y Escuelas de Medicina) and ASPEFAM (Asociación Peruana de Facultades de Medicina) were successfully developed. International Symposiums with the "Colegios Médicos" in different countries were organized with satisfactory response and interest from the medical community and health professionals.

The most important qualitative and quantitative leap for Lifestyle Medicine in Latin America was the vision of working in and from the universities, which are the natural places of academic life, where the leaders and experts of the various medical fields and disciplines are, but also where the future medical generations that will be in charge of the health of the present and the future of our countries are formed. In 2019, the Universidad Ricardo Palma in Lima, Peru, created the First Chair of Lifestyle Medicine for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Universidad de Montemorelos in Mexico generates and includes several subjects in its Medicine curriculum. Later, the Universidad de Baja California in México and the Universidad Abierta Interamericana in Argentina created the following Lifestyle Medicine Chairs. The "Consortium of Universities with Lifestyle Medicine in Latin America" was developed and strengthened.

In 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched the First International University Specialization Course in Lifestyle Medicine with a focus on Primary Health Care, from the Universidad Ricardo Palma. This Postgraduate University Course received the sponsorship and cooperation of the "European Lifestyle Medicine Organization" and 10 prestigious universities of the American continent, becoming the Master University Course for Latin America. Distinguished professors from the USA, Europe and Latin America participated in the course. The first promotion included more than 100 physicians and health professionals who completed and passed the Specialization Course, thus obtaining the University Diploma.

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As part of the products of this First Course, today we present the experiences, research works and results of clinical and epidemiological evidence in Latin American population with Lifestyle Medicine. Our thanks to all the colleagues from the different Latin American countries who contributed to make this edition a reality.

We are honored to have in this special issue as "guest editors" leading figures in the academic and Lifestyle Medicine world. Special thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Frates, Professor of the Escuela de Medicina at the Universidad de Harvard, part of the Lifestyle Medicine Institute and currently serving as President of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. To Dr. David Katz, noted and recognized leader and researcher in Lifestyle Medicine, founder and former director of Yale University's Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center(1998-2019); Past President of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine; President and Founder of the non-profit True Health Initiative; and Founder and CEO of Diet ID. Special thanks to our distinguished European colleagues, Dr. Ioannis Arkadianos who serves as Vice President of the

European Lifestyle Medicine Organization and Dr. Ioan Hanes, Scientific Director of the European Lifestyle Medicine Organization. It is important to mention that all of them participated as guest lecturers of the First International University Specialization Course in Lifestyle Medicine.

The challenges are manifold. We will continue to work to expand Lifestyle Medicine in our countries. We invite scientific societies, various professional associations, universities and leaders of society to join Lifestyle Medicine to help and contribute to improve the health of the population, emphasize prevention, early diagnosis, and integrate Lifestyle Medicine as a fundamental therapeutic pillar of chronic diseases. From a public health and primary health care perspective, positioning Lifestyle Medicine as the foundation of the health system and the integrated health network model will have an impact on optimizing health costs and improving people's quality of life.

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