



ARTICLE

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARGENTINE ASSOCIATION OF ANGIOLOGY AND CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY

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The constant evolution of humans as thinking and intuitive beings has allowed for the development of knowledge in pursuit of the cure of the individual. Along such an uncertain way, many times it was believed that the climax of knowledge had been reached. Therefore, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Jean Faure stated that “surgery has achieved such a point of perfection that any future acquisition will be insignificant”. Vicente Pataro said that time had corrected Faure’s statement, and one of the branches of surgery clearly responsible for this has been cardiovascular surgery.

Sixty-five years for a medical association seem to be enough time to evaluate its track record. However, it is not easy; intrinsically, the obliterating pathology still punishes man and forces to take giant evolutionary steps, beyond our professors’ imagination, in search of relief with less invasive and clearly better tolerated procedures. The Society, then the Association, had to adapt not only to the present change from the professional super-specialty but also to the socio-economic transformations our country went through.



“The balance of a doctor is not possible without the exchange of knowledge that eliminates the blindness of impulse with no perspectives and perfects and standardizes the true procedure.”

Miguel Ángel Lucas.



THE ORIGIN OF THE ARGENTINE SOCIETY OF ANGIOLOGY (SOCIEDAD ARGENTINA DE ANGIOLOGÍA)

In Argentina, the interest in vascular surgery can be observed in the hard work of its pioneers and perhaps Aquiles Pirovano was the one who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, gave a huge boost to vascular surgery with his work. In the late 1920s, Enrique Finochietto had 26 medical records on aortic aneurysms,

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their repair and management, and Rene Leriche's approach to enervating surgery in France took hold of the surgery service of Hospital Rawson. In 1942, Ricardo Finochietto and two of his young disciples, Alfonso Albanese and Vicente Pataro, presented their experience in the surgical treatment of arterial hypertension to the National Academy of Medicine (*Academia Nacional de Medicina*). According to his writings, Pataro's interest in vascular surgery awakened after he met Julio Diez and witnessed a lumbar ganglionectomy at Hospital Pirovano.

In 1952, these two men, Albanese and Pataro, together with an enthusiastic group of renowned angiologists, physicians and cardiologists, decided to found a society comprising their knowledge to create a discussion, training and outlook forum for the management and study of cardiovascular diseases.

For two years (1952-1953), Alfonso Albanese presided over the Society, which received international recognition during the Second International Congress of Angiology held in Lisboa in September 1953 under the chair of Joao Cid Dos Santos, in which Pataro participated as representative of the South American Chapter and the Argentine Society of Angiology (*Sociedad Argentina de Angiología*). In its first twenty five years, the Society grew noticeably, with the best angiology groups of the country among its members, and was presided over by surgeons, angiologists and cardiologists (including Alfredo Buzzi, Jorge Parano, Elías Sales, Antonio Perreta). It promptly gained international significance in the Congress of the International Vascular Society in 1969 and the Latin American Congress in 1978 under the chair of Rubén Siano Quiroz. Together with Mario D'Angelo, I witnessed Siano's efforts to hold such an event with success during the hard times our country were going through. It was possible thanks to his tireless work capacity.

Two milestones should be mentioned. The first one is the Journal of Angiology (*Revista de Angiología*) founded in 1952 under the direction of Diego Zavaleta, today known as the Argentine Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery (*Revista Argentina de Cirugía Cardiovascular*). Its development was not easy, it underwent many changes – all aimed at keeping it updated – and finally in 1966 an Editorial Committee, an Editorial Board and a group of Associated Editors were created to publish, in March 1967, the first number of the Argentine Journal of Angiology (*Revista Argentina de Angiología*) with Dr. Eduardo Kitainik as director and Dr. Miguel Ángel Lucas as Deputy Director. The second great landmark is undoubtedly the Argentine College of Angiology (*Colegio Argentino de Angiología*), which was founded on November 30, 1966 at the

initiative of Delfin Vilanova (the then Head of the Vascular Surgery Service in Room VI of Hospital Rawson) and was directed by Samuel Rascovan. Our Society was then presided over by Dr. Eduardo Kitainik and I was one of the privileged students of the 1971-1972 program under the direction of the ineffable “Chango” Almonacid. Forty years later, I am pleased to participate as teacher in an updated college that applies current learning concepts. The program is now annual with two modules: a core one and a peripheral one.

The creation of the Argentine College of Cardiovascular Surgeons (*Colegio Argentino de Cirujanos Cardiovasculares - CACCV*) in 1975 under the presidency of Dr. René Favalaro was a new perspective in the history of the now called Association. The College would cover the need of its members for social security, medical and legal fees, and, essentially, union representation. The competition was perhaps in the training area, in which the Association of Angiology wanted to keep its inherited degrees for the development of the area. Although the relationship between the College and the Association had its ups and downs with clear disagreements, mutual respect was always present, as stated by Dr. Gerónimo Guastavino in his speech during the inaugural ceremony of Luis Molteni as president of the College: “... We all have high expectations for the capacity and intelligence resulting from the union of the Argentine College of Cardiovascular Surgeons and the Argentine Association of Angiology”. It was the year 2001.

From the union of ethical and scientific values, the College and the Association today keep the characteristics predicted by their founders: the protection of cardiovascular surgeons, the spread of knowledge about the specialization, the training of young surgeons, and the certification of their associated professionals and members throughout the country.

These 65 years of the Association of Angiology may be divided into three periods. The first one extends until the 1980's, when the clinical-surgical orientation of the then Society started to feel the effects of the super-specialty. The advent of extracorporeal surgery promptly spread throughout our country, leading to the formation of teams of cardiologists, surgeons, anesthesiologists, internists and therapists. A gap then opened between cardiac surgeons and peripheral vascular surgeons. Many professionals moved to different societies – some already existed, others were new. At the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, peripheral vascular surgery seemed to have achieved its maximum level of development. The attendance to the meetings of the Argentine Medical Association (*Asociación*



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Médica Argentina), of which we were an affiliate, decreased and gradually we were relegated to distant offices of the old building on Santa Fe street.

In 1982, the Society began to hold its congresses every four years in connection with the Argentine Congress of Surgery and today maintains this frequency while holding annual conferences between congresses. Although program differences have been kept and the Association of Angiology has two days to develop its program activities, the Congress of Surgery makes its great infrastructure available for the organization of our congress, which, despite the wide offer of annual conferences, maintains its scientific value and distinction as shown by the latest excellent comments made by specialty professionals.

Almost in the 1990's, the idea of merging the Association of Angiology with the then Society of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery (*Sociedad de Cirugía Torácica y Cardiovascular*), which was also affected by the crisis and the diversity of its members, stemmed from previous joint conferences. The project was expected to be implemented in the 1992 Conferences to be held at Patio de la Madera in the city of Rosario. Roberto Pittaluga was the then president of the Society of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery. In the end, the pro-independence feeling prevailed and the Congress was successfully held in that city of the province of Santa Fe with Frank Veith as the foreign guest of honor. A year later, the Society Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery became the Society of Thoracic Surgery (*Sociedad de Cirugía Torácica*).

Finally, I think the last stage is closely related to the achievements of Juan Carlos Parodi. The extraordinary development of vascular surgery based on the new endovascular approach created new vascular surgeons, "hybrids" as Parodi named them, who not only know about anatomy and surgical techniques but also handle catheters, guides and balloons and interpret hemodynamics and medical imaging, with the great advantage of knowing the evolutionary history of degenerative vascular diseases and the suitable therapeutic solution to implement because of their training.

After 65 years, the Association of Angiology has survived its mentors and has walked together with three bright generations of Argentine vascular surgeons. Today, it faces a new scientific outlook, globalization, flows of information, and the fast development of new techniques. Our young disciples are in the presence of fascinating medicine with apparently unimaginable boundaries, hard and enviable work ahead. Aware of their aptitudes, I do not think I am wrong when I say that we are celebrating the first 65 years of the Association of Angiology. ■