



## EDITORIAL

## Moving forward and making changes to gain perspective and keep improving

### Continuar y cambiar, para ganar perspectiva y seguir mejorando

Luis Carlos Blesa Baviera

Presidente de la Asociación Española de Pediatría, EAP CS Serrería II, Valencia, Spain



It is always beneficial to stop and reflect at the midway mark, or halfway through a project, to evaluate the progress toward the established objectives and gain perspective in order to envision new goals. In the present year of 2024, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Asociación Española de Pediatría (AEP, Spanish Association of Pediatrics), I would like to take the opportunity to look back beyond the very last year. In considering the trajectory of the AEP, it is impossible not to remember the paediatricians who preceded us and give them due recognition, as they forged a path in knowledge and service from the beginning in the past century. Our colleagues in the History Committee have developed, on the occasion of this milestone, a magnificent commemorative handbook that demonstrates that our association has been able, from its inception in 1949, to adapt and change in tune with society and the Spanish health care system.<sup>1</sup>

Today, our association represents 13 000 paediatricians, 14 regional paediatrics societies and 24 paediatric speciality societies, but the AEP has always been more than a sum of counts: it is a synergy of efforts driven by the pursuit of excellence and the commitment to guarantee the best possible care to our children and adolescents.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout our history, the AEP has played a decisive role at key junctures as we witnessed the gradual configuration of a specific health care system for the child and adolescent population, the professionalization of paediatric care and the standardization of the paediatric training curriculum.

Similarly, our scientific reputation has been carved, at both the national and international level, with the help of publications such as the *Anales de Pediatría* journal, which has been published without interruption since 1968, and the momentum built through our national congresses, which continue to be a cornerstone in paediatric education and research.<sup>3</sup>

These are but a few brushstrokes in the depiction of a history replete with great successes that were not always easy to achieve, but were possible thanks to the collaborative effort of many professionals committed to the AEP and, by extension, to paediatrics.

Embracing the legacy of the executive committees that preceded us, and guided by the vision of advancing in the ongoing improvement of our association, in recent years we have been working on the optimization of the resources it generates, the transition to a new training model and offering high-quality services to the societies affiliated to the AEP.

In the past months, the lines of action have materialised in a few emblematic projects, such as the opening of our new headquarters at the end of last year in the calle de Pintor Rosales in Madrid; and, more recently, the launching

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E-mail address: [presidente.aep@aeped.es](mailto:presidente.aep@aeped.es)



Figure 1 Logo of the AEP.

in the calle Fernando el Católico in Madrid of the Academia AEP, a space devoted to continuing education in paediatrics, equipped with cutting-edge technology to offer online and in-person sessions, with a filming studio and conference rooms with capacity for up to 120 people.

This does not only entail a change in physical settings, but an adaptation to the current times, seeking to proactively address the needs of our members and pursue one of our primordial missions as a medical and scientific society: promoting progress in the training of paediatricians through the updating of knowledge and facilitating the integration of the latest scientific advances in clinical practice with the aim of increasing professional competence and ensuring excellence in care for children and adolescents.

These changes have been accompanied by a renewal of the visual identity of the AEP. We decided to update the graphic image of the association with a new logo, more modern and inspiring, reminding us of the essence of our activity, which is based on care and nurturing (Fig. 1). Two dots of different size represent an adult and a child, and an incomplete circle the arms of the adult. These graphic elements, which are separate but joined in a single image, bring to mind the scene of an adult, the paediatrician, tucking in a child, a minimalist expression of paediatric care.

Looking to the future also requires an introspective effort to learn what you, as members of this institution, expect from the coming years. To this end, in this first semester of 2024, we launched the Impulso AEP project, an active listening process that has included several focus groups, a campaign in which 400 random interviews were conducted by telephone and an online survey of the 13 000 members that yielded several hundred responses. The analysis of this information, which had never been performed or evaluated in such a large sample, will reveal the actual concerns and expectations of our collective as regards the AEP. For there could be no better information to guide us into the future than that provided directly by our members and member societies.<sup>4</sup>

Today, our association is one of the Spanish medical and scientific associations with the highest social and media impact and it is the key advisor for the public health administration on matters of child and adolescent health.<sup>5</sup> This privileged position not only entails great responsibility, but also offers a unique opportunity to lead initiatives to promote public policy aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in our society.

The AEP must be part of the public debate on issues concerning paediatric care and the improvement of child and adolescent health and work collaboratively in an expanded reach with other health care, education and social welfare professionals, with families and with the relevant public and private institutions. It is time to promote cooperative projects and, in this context, we have adopted more proactive roles in initiatives of a social scope, such as the

collaboration with the Spanish public television network (TVE) series *Croco Doc*,<sup>6</sup> for which we act as scientific consultants, or the development of the *Plan Digital Familiar* (Family Digital Plan), a platform that offers evidence-based recommendations on the use of digital technology for children and adolescents endorsed by the Agencia Española de Protección de Datos (Spanish Data Protection Agency).<sup>7</sup>

Seeking additional economic resources to enable us to diversify and continue to optimise training activities for our members, we have secured European funds through the participation in the Safer Internet Centre Spain (SIC-SPAIN) project, a consortium formed by 9 corporations and the AEP formed on the initiative of the Instituto Nacional de Ciberseguridad (INCIBE, National Institute of Cybersecurity), so that paediatricians can be trained on the Plan Digital Familiar and offer guidance to families about the appropriate use of the internet.<sup>8</sup>

The AEP is preparing to continue consolidating its position as the point of reference in paediatrics in upcoming years, with the support of its members, represented by the different affiliated regional and speciality societies, in an organizational structure that draws from the talent and generosity of tens of professionals that contribute through committees, working groups and various platforms. A structure that has been further reinforced this year with the institution of new committees, like the committee on mental health or the committee on life support.<sup>9</sup> Without all of you, it would not have been possible to arrive to where we are today, and it would not be possible to continue on our path taking the steps that are still and will continue to be necessary. Thank you for your enthusiasm, dedication and commitment.

Far from becoming complacent, we are aware that these renewal movements have yet another purpose: to continue promoting and advocating for a paediatric care model that has proven essential to the health of our children and adolescents. The paediatric care model in Spain, that our predecessors worked so hard to establish, is facing particularly challenging times due to the scarcity of resources, the inadequate use of health care services and the resulting work overload and burnout.

The complexities we face as a profession and in health care delivery demand a courageous response and that we become stronger as a collective. The recognition of paediatric specialities and the improvement of the working conditions in primary care paediatric practice continue to be non-negotiable goals.

We celebrate our 75th anniversary not only as a milestone and a source of pride, but also as a promise for the future. Let's continue to look forward together.

Once again, I want to thank all who have been part of this wonderful history.

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