

Navigating Confidently in the Sea of Uncertainty

Navegar com Confiança no Mar da Incerteza

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The publication of this Issue 3 of the Portuguese Journal of Internal Medicine (RPMI) prompts much reflection, if only due to its length in articles. There is a common thread among many of the articles, for example, between the Editorial by the President of SPMI Luís Duarte,¹ the Point of View by Jorge Almeida *et al*,² and the Position by the College of Internal Medicine, and by its president, Faustino Ferreira. The topic is the Medical Intermediate Care Units, and quoting Faustino Ferreira, this issue represents "a significant milestone in clarifying the areas and competencies of Internal Medicine."³ Reading through threads (in a tradition that predates hyperlinks or hypertexts) leads us, on the other hand, from the Letter to the Editor signed by the President of the European Federation of Internal Medicine, Ricardo Gómez-Huelgas, and the President of the Spanish Society of Internal Medicine, María Montserrat Chimeno-Viñas,⁴ to the topic of Decisive Integrated Care for an Efficient National Health Service, in comment on the article by João Araújo Correia, in Issue 2 of RPMI.⁵ It is a reading proposal that I am making to you, and the guiding thread now goes to another Letter to the Editor, by Inês Salvado de Carvalho *et al*, from the Guarda Local Health Unit, which addresses the role of the Day Hospital in Internal Medicine.⁶

This common thread leads us to the role of Internal Medicine in the national health system, and it is up to RPMI to promote the discussion, taking on the task of receiving, supporting, and editing the different perspectives of various colleagues who speak about what they know, and represent groups of colleagues who gather to discuss what they know.

As I have already mentioned, this issue is extensive and includes 5 original articles. Another theme I suggest for your reading is navigating safely through uncertainty (I really like oxymorons and paradoxes). The original articles remind us that we need a lot of humility in the face of the uncertainty of knowledge, of the uncertain path that the scientific method helps to navigate, and that it is possible to put uncertainty into numbers and check if those numbers are reliable (hence the importance in internal medicine of knowing how to navigate uncertainty skillfully). This, in turn, connects to what Vasco Barreto mentions in his Opinion Article, "Nota de Alta: Reflections and Proposal for a Practical Guide", as "Clinical

medicine is a science-based activity, but with a high degree of imprecision and uncertainty."⁷ And it's worth listening to the podcast I did with Vasco on this topic after reading it.⁸

More connecting threads are running through the Northern Lights of the Winter School of Internal Medicine,⁹ which brings together colleagues from all over Europe. This Europe that is so uncertain and that more than ever needs those who know how to navigate uncertainty safely. It is a very rich issue, with clinical cases and more images.

I slide into another paradox, but this Issue 3 of the RPMI makes me confident in what is uncertain, because with it, we contribute to improving our accuracy. I finally quote the great Professor of Statistics, David Spiegelhalter: "We need to proclaim our uncertainty with pride."¹⁰ ■

Enjoy your reading!

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