

The importance of Regional Integration and Cooperation in the Development of Science

DOI: 10.5377/alerta.v7i1.17499

Xochitl Sandoval López

National Institute of Health, San Salvador, El Salvador.

Correspondence

✉ dalia.sandoval@salud.gob.sv

ORCID: 0000-0002-0988-1313

Dear readers of Alerta journal, in this new issue we are pleased to present a wide range of content comprising six case reports featuring unusual and challenging clinical situations. These reports offer a detailed overview of diagnoses and treatments that can be helpful for healthcare professionals in their daily practice. Among them are: "Eisenmenger Syndrome Associated with an *ostium secundum* Atrial Septal Defect in an Adult Woman," "Mesenteric Heterotopic Ossification as a Cause of Intestinal Obstruction" and "Kartagener Syndrome and Rheumatoid Arthritis. Case Report," among others, for scientific or educational purposes. At the same time, they stimulate and open windows to conduct research studies in the future with a higher level of evidence.ⁱ

We present four original articles: "Factors that influence the survival of dialysis patients in El Salvador," which is highlighted on the cover, given the importance of adopting preventive and control measures in chronic kidney disease. In addition, "Somatoform Disorders and Personality Traits in Hospitalized Patients with Chronic Back Pain in El Salvador" is a relevant topic that generates evidence on healthcare in the Salvadoran Social Security Institute. Furthermore, two other articles showed novel research in diverse scientific areas, offering a unique perspective on the most recent developments in their respective disciplines.

There are included five narrative reviews with emerging topics such as "Genetic Alterations Associated with Parkinson's and Alzheimer's Disease: Evolution and Response to Treatment," related to the evolution and response to treatment; "Burnout

Syndrome in Health Care Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic," and "Intermittent Fasting and Caloric Restriction as an Adjunctive Treatment in Alzheimer's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis," among others. These narrative reviews are based on extensive literature searches and explore specific topics from different angles, providing an overview and critical analysis of the existing literature responding to a knowledge gap. They are, therefore, valuable for those who wish to keep up to date with advances in their field of study.ⁱⁱ

Finally, I encourage you to read the three letters to the editor. One of them calls for nutritional education for parents and caregivers to promote healthy lifestyles in children. In addition another letter mentions the importance of effective communication as a contribution of linguistics applied to healthcare services; and finally, the "Regional Integration in Health in Central America and Dominican Republic: Achievements and Opportunities."

The latter is of great relevance for the editorial line of Alerta, as it is the product of the Annual Meeting of the Latin American Regional Network of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes, IANPHI/LatAm, which was held in El Salvador from October 16 to 18, 2023. The National Institutes of Public Health, homonymous to ours, play a fundamental role in the mitigation of health inequities and contribute from a scientific perspective to promote the transition to a rights-based, sustainable, and harmonized development model with policies to reduce the carbon footprint to address climate change, food insecurity, and

 OPEN ACCESS

La importancia de la integración y la cooperación regional en el desarrollo de la ciencia

Suggested citation:

Sandoval López X. The importance of Regional Integration and Cooperation in the Development of Science. Alerta. 2024;7(1):3-4. DOI: 10.5377/alerta.v7i1.17499

Received:

January 19, 2024.

Accepted:

January 23, 2024.

Published:

January 25, 2024.

Author contribution:

XSL: writing, revising and editing.

Conflict of interests:

The author declares there are not conflict of interests.

malnutrition, as well as health emergencies at the global, regional and national levels, topics addressed at the annual meeting.ⁱⁱⁱ

This letter examines the relevant aspects that should be included in a regional strategy that, based on the analysis of information on public health issues, will make it possible to develop a proposal to strengthen regional integration to address the main social determinants of health. At the same time, it provides a route to continue promoting relevant opportunities identified in Central American health integration. At the same time, it represents a challenge that shows that this integration would facilitate the exchange of epidemiological information, the harmonization of health policies and regulations, and access to medicines and medical supplies at better prices. In the current global context, where communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS are a threat to public healthcare, this integration becomes even more significant and crucial to improve people's wellness since working together would bring significant progress in terms of prevention, medical care, and promotion of healthy lifestyles.^{iv}

I want to highlight that the number of letters to the editor *Alerta* receives increases with each issue published. These letters encourage debate and discussion among our readers, which allows a dynamic exchange of ideas. It is an open space where readers have the opportunity to express their opinions on relevant topics in science, medicine, and public policy.

We hope you enjoy reading the latest edition of *Alerta* and find its content both informative and stimulating for the development of science. As always, we thank everyone for the continued support of this publication, an invaluable jewel for the National Institute of Health.

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