



It's innovation, stupid

The phrase “It’s the economy, stupid” became famous as part of Bill Clinton’s 1992 presidential run as one of the central messages in what ultimately became a successful campaign. It became popular to the point it is still used today around the world, with multiple variations, to highlight the need to focus on the material aspects of a subject.

During the last period we have achieved significant improvement in the perception and indicators of PANLAR as an organization. Achieved and projected growth enables us to be optimistic in this regard. When we speak to peers from other regions of the world about the possibility of global rheumatology, and when they see our potential for growth, they encourage us to specialize in areas they consider original.

Contributions such as a better understanding of the chikungunya virus or chagas disease are appreciated if they come from our regions, as if progress in treatment of the most common diseases we see as rheumatologists in the world such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, spondylarthrosis, to name a few, were reserved only for those hailing from these important centers of knowledge, underestimating the original contributions that we can make from our region.

Those who have followed this advice have been able to distinguish themselves in some way, but they still represent a small percentage of what we can do and produce as a region.

Thus we return to Clinton’s phrase adapted to this situation and strongly emphasize: “It’s innovation, stupid.”

We believe that only through innovation can we move forward and contribute to a truly global rheumatology. We are entering the fourth industrial revolution. After the agricultural, the industrial and the technological revolution, we are now in the time of digital

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NOTES BY THE PRESIDENT

convergence, of Internet, of artificial intelligence. In a few years, many of the things we do will be completed differently or we will have new tools to do them better, they will be cheaper and more widely available (see a video of my presentation [The future is now](#)).

I believe it does not make sense to merely specialize in areas others oversee. Rather, we shall work on what we know, but in different, better and new ways: we cannot and should not miss this opportunity.

From PANLAR we have to taken firm steps that better explain our position on innovation.

- We have included it as one of the [Pillars of the Development Plan](#).
- Each of PANLAR's standing committees as innovation issues at the core of its [plan of action](#) and in the development of follow-up indicators.
- We designed an Innovation Award that aims to identify and allocate resources for new ideas in all fields of rheumatology. In both versions we have received 17 projects from all the geographical regions of PANLAR, a much higher number than what we usually receive for the PANLAR award, the most prestigious and oldest of all our awards.
- We have earmarked space for all innovation issues in the PANLAR events architecture space for all innovation issues.
- Access to innovative thinking and technology is not only important for the professional, but to patients who have appropriated it. Many of these technologies are already available and there are countless ways to encourage innovation. Scarcity is the mother of innovation and as Latin Americans we know this better than anyone. Our vision should not differ the ideas of those who seek knowledge and to influence their region and the world.
- If we want to have a [leadership position in the new economy and make](#) PANLAR an undisputed frontrunner in global rheumatology, we shall continue to promote innovation as a differential factor.

As Latin Americans we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Carlo Vinicio Caballero Uribe MD PhD ©

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