

ISHM - THE 41st INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Mexico City - Puebla, 7-12 September 2008

Every two years, the International Society for the History of Medicine (ISHM) organizes a major international conference dedicated to the history of medicine, its place in medicine today, and to the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the main topics of medicine in general. Last year, the congress was held in a beautiful urban landscape of Mexico City and Puebla under the patronage of the Mexican Society of History and Philosophy of Medicine, and supported by the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico and the Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, the Academia Nacional de Medicina de Mexico, Ministry of Health, Mexico City Government, Puebla City Municipal Government, Health and Tourism secretaries of the Puebla State, the Fundacion Mexicana para la Salud, and the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia. The Congress lasted six days that have been enriched with a vast scientific program of speakers and posters as well as with the rich cultural heritage of Mexico and a live social program. The Congress took place at the Palacio de Medicina of the Facultad de Medicina at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM, in México City (from the 7 to 9 September 2009), and at the Facultad de Medicina of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla for the next days (10-12 September).

The main Congress topics were Medicine in the American Continent, Medicine in the second half of the XXth century, Methodological proposals for research on History of Medicine, History of therapeutics, and History of Medical Ethics. Of course, the final program contained a great variety of other topics to meet the interests of the audience. More than thirty countries were represented at the Congress by national delegates, societies, members, and non members of the ISHM that presented their scientific work in the form of oral presentations, magistral lectures, and posters.



Congress opening ceremony
Svečano otvaranje kongresa



Up and running
Radna atmosfera



Congress participants
Sudionici kongresa



Congress participants from Croatia: Igor Salopek, Anja Petaros, and Josip Ažman
Sudionici iz Hrvatske na kongresu: Igor Salopek, Anja Petaros i Josip Ažman

The social program included a visit to the National Museum of Anthropology of Mexico City, a visit to Cacaxtla Archaeological site, a theatrical dance “The Myth of Quetzalcoatl” performed in Puebla, and a presentation of medico-historical books and volumes in the beautiful Edificio Carolino, Biblioteca Lafragua in Puebla. The visit to the National Museum of Anthropology of Mexico City must have impressed most the participants, as they were given an exclusive opportunity to enjoy a Museum collection of the most incredible archaeological and ethnographic Mexican heritage in the silence of the night and in the marvelous ambience of the Museum building. It was an unique opportunity to immerse completely in the rich Mexican history and to feel it as intimately as we never had before. The visit to Cacaxtla was also a remarkable event that gathered all the participants, who could admire the original coloured wall decorations that uniquely combine the symbols of Altiplano cultures and Mayan influences. The social program continued in Puebla where it ended with a gala dinner on Friday, 12 September.

The 41st International Congress on the History of Medicine was also the opportunity to elect new Executive Committee (see www.bium.univ-paris5.fr/ishm/eng/) and a new President of the ISHM, Professor Giorgio Zanchin. *One of the main goals of the new committee and the president will be extending cooperation between specialists in various biomedical research areas and giving more visibility to the work and development of the society.*

The Congress owes its success to vast and important international academic contributions and to the efforts of the organising committee and Mexican hosts. The only limitations of the Congress were parallel sessions, which did not allow participation at all lectures and the language barrier for those who could not understand English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese, all of which were the official languages of the Congress. The massive turnout of speakers and participants has resulted in the publication of a special six-issue supplement to *Analecta Historico Medica*, entitled “Memorias 41 Congreso Internacional de Historia de la Medicina”.

This Congress gathers in one place world experts of the history of medicine and affiliated scientific fields and encourages new collaborations and international projects, but it also keeps reassessing the place of the history of medicine in modern medicine, increases historical consciousness among physicians, and challenges new ideas and new solutions through the history of medicine, making the history of medicine closer to a new and modern concept of medical science.

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