

The AsMA Global Connection Story with the Iberoamerican Association of Aerospace Medicine

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Dear readers, members, and friends of AsMA,

In this issue of our Journal, I interview my long-standing friend Ramón, who has played an important role in the development and progress of the Iberoamerican Association of Aerospace Medicine (AIMA), one of our important affiliated associations.

My friend, tell me something about yourself and your Association.

Dear friend and colleague, my name is Ramón Domínguez-Mompell, and I work in Madrid as a Class 1 AME. My interest in



Ramon Mompell

aviation brought me into a career as a doctor of medicine for Iberia, the Spanish airline, where I subsequently came to head up its medical service and create an onsite Aeromedical Centre. In that role, I have organized many congresses, and I became a member and later president of AMDA, the Airline Medical Directors Association, and also a member of the AEA, the Association of European Airlines, which has its headquarters in Brussels,

where I was the Chairperson from 2006 to 2008. I am also a former President of the AIMA (2015-2017), have been a Fellow of AsMA since 2008, and an Academician of IASM since 2004, and for the last few years have been one of the auditors of ESAM, the European Society of Aerospace Medicine. In 2007, at the annual AsMA meeting in New Orleans, I was one of the founders of the new IAAD (the International Association of Aerospace Dentistry). I therefore also work as a dentist in a private clinic in Madrid together with other colleagues including my two sons. I am very happy to have many good friends and colleagues in our aviation family all over the world. You are interviewing me here in Madrid because of our old friendship. However, the current President of AIMA is Dr. Lina Sanchez from Colombia, where she works for the military. So you see, we are also a mixed civilian-military aviation body.

What is the relationship between your Iberoamerican Association and AsMA and how long has it existed?

The Asociación Iberoamericana de Medicina Aeroespacial (Iberoamerican Aerospace Medical Association) is an international

association with members not only from the whole American continent from the United States to Patagonia but also from the two Iberian countries in Europe,

i.e., Portugal and Spain. This Association was founded on 10 November 1976, its first President being Dr. Amezcua González, so well known to all of us, as the Sociedad Latinoamericana de Medicina de Aviación y del Espacio, subsequently changing its name to the better-known Iberoamerican Association of Aerospace Medicine in 1989. Dr. Amezcua together with a handful of other Ibero-american colleagues wanted to create a forum for Spanish-speaking colleagues who could discuss organizational and scientific aspects of their specialty in their own language, share scientific data and experience, and seek to harmonize aeromedical assessments in their countries. The Association has about 80 members. Since the very beginning we have held our annual meeting at each AsMA congress, where we do our association business but also have taken part in the scientific program of the congress in the Spanish language since 1998. It is becoming an ever more frequent practise for us to organise an Iberoamerican fiesta in the evening, where everybody is welcome. We feel very connected with the AsMA community as the home of our annual meeting, but many of us also make presentations in other parts of the congress and other international forums.

What works well in this relationship and what could be improved in our collaboration?

I can say that our collaboration with AsMA works just perfectly for us. We also bring quite a few participants to the annual AsMA congress, who want to see and speak to each other about the events of the previous year. Many of us are also active in AsMA constituent organizations, on AsMA committees, or chair a session at the meeting. When we were sitting together, we discussed the possibility of holding an Iberoamerican aerospace medicine congress in one of our countries, but we would probably need support from AsMA. Such a regional meeting could naturally attract colleagues who have problems travelling to the United States because of the distances involved or for financial reasons, and this would bring the know-how of AsMA closer to them by



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allowing first-class aeromedical courses closer to home. We will further explore this possibility.

Do you have ideas for AsMA with regard to outreach and support for your association and/or for spreading information from your association?

As I have said, the scientific and social interaction during the annual congress is first class, and we are proud of two of our leaders: Dr. Felix Porrás from Mexico is the chair of the AsMA GLOC (Global Liaison and Outreach Committee), and Dr. Eduard Ricaurte will become a member of ExCom this year, as a member-at-large. It will certainly give a further boost to our relationship.

Are you interested in participating in the work or leadership of the Association?

As I said, I was involved in the leadership of one of the AsMA constituent associations: AMDA. After more than 20 years of involvement in AsMA affairs, I must say that at the moment I am gradually changing my busy professional life, as we all feel we need to do as we get older. My first goal would be to connect back with the old continent, i.e. Europe, to the leadership of the Association of Spain (SEMA), to continue and work on my role in the European Association (ESAM), and then later I may get involved in the global work of AsMA together with ESAM, pursuing strategies which reinforce the linkage between them. It is a must to say we are very proud that you have become President of AsMA. Good work, Roland.

So Lina, since you are the current President of AIMA, please tell us a little about yourself.

I was born in Colombia. I am a medical doctor, otolaryngology specialist, a university teaching specialist, at the Colombia's Military University, and a Ph.D. in Public Health at the National University of Colombia. I am medical officer of the Colombian Air Force since 1988, with education and professional experience in aerospace medicine, human factors, and aviation safety. I have worked in the clinical, operational, and administrative areas, as a medical specialist, flight surgeon, Aviation Medical Examiner (AME), flight physiology trainer, professor, scientist,

Director of the Aerospace Medical Center, and General Surgeon and Chief of the Health Services of the Colombian Air Force. I am also an AsMA Fellow, Aerospace Human Factors Association (AsHFA) member, International Association of Aviation and Space (IAASM) member, past president of the Colombian Association of Aerospace Medicine and currently the President of the Iberoamerican Association of Aerospace Medicine (IAAM).



Lina Maria Sanchez Rubio

What aerospace training capabilities exist in the countries included in your region?

The countries in the region provides formal education and courses at the under- and post-graduate level, endorsed by prestigious Universities and civil and military institutions. The main programs and courses are: Aerospace Medicine Residency; Specialization Course in Aerospace Medicine; Basic and Advanced Aerospace Medicine Courses; Aerospace Physiology Course; Aeromedical Evacuation Course; Aviation Safety Course; Operational Safety Master; Aviation Psychology Course; and Aerospace Physiological Training, including: Hypobaric Chamber, Basic and Advanced Spatial Disorientation, Night Vision and Night Vision Goggles and Ejection Seat. These courses are realized regularly in Spain, México, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile for civilian and military people. There are Spanish and Portuguese language courses and they are not just for citizens, but also foreign students. Also, our countries carry out continued medical education by means of national and international conferences, symposiums, and seminars.

Many thanks for our discussions and may our enjoyable friendships long continue!