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WELCOME ADDRESS

Beyond the Congress: a continuing responsibility

For the Spanish Association of Physiotherapists (AEF), hosting the 6th Europe Region Physiotherapy Congress on behalf of the Europe Region of World Physiotherapy in Madrid represents both a privilege and a responsibility. Beyond the organisational significance of bringing our professional community together, it offers an opportunity to reflect on a fundamental question: what should remain when a scientific congress comes to an end? Its lasting contribution cannot be measured solely by the quality of its programme or the exchanges that take place during its sessions, but also by what we are prepared to question, develop and ultimately change as a result.

The publication of this collection of abstracts in *Archives of Physiotherapy* is an essential part of that commitment. Its purpose extends beyond documenting the scientific contributions presented in Madrid. By preserving these contributions within an accessible scientific record, we enable the questions, ideas, and findings they contain to reach audiences beyond the Congress itself, stimulate further investigation, and contribute to an ongoing process of scientific development. Publication should therefore be understood not as the conclusion of a scientific endeavour, but as an invitation to its continuation.

Such an invitation also entails responsibility. Scientific progress requires more than the accumulation of findings; it demands methodological rigour, intellectual honesty, and a willingness to acknowledge uncertainty. The concise nature of conference abstracts makes critical interpretation particularly important. Their value lies not only in the results they communicate, but also in the questions they raise and the opportunities they create for further scrutiny and investigation. A scientifically mature profession must be prepared to challenge its own assumptions and distinguish genuine advances in knowledge from changes that are merely novel.

This principle carries particular significance for clinical practice. The future of physiotherapy will be shaped not merely by the evidence we generate, but by our willingness to change practice when that evidence demands it. Scientific knowledge acquires its fullest meaning when it informs better decisions, challenges ineffective interventions, and contributes to improvements in the care people receive. Progress sometimes requires us to strengthen established approaches; at other times, it demands the courage to reconsider or abandon them.

Scientific societies have a fundamental role in fostering this culture. Our responsibility extends beyond organising congresses and disseminating research. We must encourage emerging researchers, promote independent and clinically relevant inquiry, facilitate critical debate, and help bridge the distance between scientific discovery and its practical application. Above all, we must ensure that professional advancement remains inseparable from our responsibility to patients, communities, and society.

As the host association, the AEF is proud to contribute to this endeavour. Madrid provides the setting for an important scientific gathering, but our ambition is that its influence should extend well beyond the Congress itself. I wish to express our sincere gratitude to everyone whose dedication has made this event and its scientific contributions possible, and to *Archives of Physiotherapy* for helping to ensure that this work remains accessible to the wider scientific community.

I hope that readers will find in these pages not only results worth considering, but questions worth pursuing and assumptions worth challenging. Ultimately, the true legacy of this Congress will not be determined by what we have presented in Madrid, but by what we are prepared to do differently because of it. Our responsibility does not end when the Congress closes or when these abstracts are published. It continues whenever scientific knowledge leads us to make better decisions and, through them, to improve people's lives.

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