



LETTERS

TO THE NEWSLINE EDITOR:

We are writing in reference to a recent Newsline article on nuclear medicine in Latin America (*J Nucl Med.* 1999;40(9):9N–12N).

In our opinion, several sentences in the article do not express the real status of the practice of nuclear medicine in Mexico.

First, we would like to point out that formal residency training in nuclear medicine began in our country in 1968. In Mexico City, there are 3 medical centers dedicated to this purpose, each with its own library and many journal subscriptions, including the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine*.

The Mexican Board of Nuclear Medicine was established in 1973, and all physicians certified by the board are recognized by the Mexican National Academy of Medicine and the federal government of Mexico. Many of these physicians are well known in the United States and other countries.

It is true that in some places in our country nuclear medicine specialists work with older electronic equipment, but it is also true that most modern hospitals have state of the art technology and routinely perform all nuclear medicine procedures, with the exception of PET.

It is regrettable that other members of our board and society were not interviewed for the article—a more well-balanced view of nuclear medicine in Mexico might have been the result.

Felipe Gordon, MD
Chair, *Sociedad Mexicana de Medicina Nuclear*
Mexico City, Mexico

Herlinda Vera, MD
Chair, *Consejo Mexicano de Medicos Nucleares*
Mexico City, Mexico

Alicia Graef, MD
Academia Nacional de Medicina
Mexico City, Mexico

TO THE NEWSLINE EDITOR:

Regarding the recent Newsline article on nuclear medicine in Latin America (*J Nucl Med.* 1999;40(9):9N–12N), I would like to say the following about Mexico:

It is well known that past corruption and attendant economic woes have made it difficult for the majority of nuclear medicine physicians in Mexico to pursue basic formal nuclear medicine training and/or advanced education opportunities abroad,

including graduate degrees and research fellowships. Both undergraduate medical students and nuclear medicine residents are in urgent need of educational materials including books, recent journals, video- and audiotapes, and slides. Nuclear medicine residents and specialists continue to face difficulties and lack of either government or institutional support when trying to present already-accepted papers and presentations at prestigious meetings and symposia outside Mexico.

Nevertheless, government officials assure us that the Mexican economy is on the right track and that we will not suffer yet another abrupt devaluation of our currency at the end of the next presidential term in 2000. If this prediction is true, we can hope for better training, improved education, expanded clinical opportunities, more support for research projects and fellowships abroad, and better and more widely available state-of-the-art medical equipment for young and deserving nuclear medicine physicians. The Mexican Society of Nuclear Medicine and the International College of Nuclear Medicine Physicians are actively working to enhance educational opportunities for nuclear medicine specialists, but I believe nuclear medicine still has a long way to go in Mexico.

I would also like to note that, far from being a skeptic about the recent acquisition of the country's first PET camera and cyclotron at the National Autonomous University in Mexico City, I have the most sincere best wishes for the project. I hope that it can begin functioning as soon as possible, with scientific success and the sustained economic support it will need for continued research (a provision that may not yet have been adequately planned). As of January 11, 2000, a long-lasting university strike has prevented progress with the PET project, adversely affecting other scientific projects, medical research, and good will (some of them irreversibly).

Carlos Martínez-Duncker, MD
Head of *Molecular Nuclear Medicine*
Hospital Infantil de México Federico Gómez
Mexico City, Mexico

RESPONSE FROM THE NEWSLINE EDITOR:

As a result of the interest and feedback Newsline received on the recent article on nuclear medicine in Latin America, we plan to expand on the limited information provided about Mexican nuclear medicine in a future article devoted to that subject. We appreciate input from physicians in Mexico who practice nuclear medicine and from leaders in the specialty there.