



Editorial

## Portuguese Society of Coloproctology (SPCP) – Leap Forward by Looking Back

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As we think about Coloproctology as a medical-surgical specialty, we immediately realize how recent it is, but in fact, it has a long and documented history, spanning over 5.000 years. Since prehistory, proctological issues have been mentioned by different ancient civilizations, through many reports of the use of enemas, suppositories, and laxatives, or describing operative techniques and surgical instruments. The progressive and fast development of Coloproctology has been more notorious since the first decades of the last century, being the constitution and growth of Scientific Societies a rather good example of such. They have played a key role in the generation and dissemination of knowledge, in supporting training and research, and in educating people about coloproctological health.

One of the aims of this reflection is to briefly go through the history of the Portuguese Society of Coloproctology (SPCP), as by scrutinizing the past we shall be able to plan and prepare for the future (Christensen, 2006; Lyons, 2006).<sup>1,2</sup> In this respect, Scientific Societies have a distinctive mission. In February 1988, a group of members of the *Sociedade das Ciências Médicas de Lisboa* proposed the creation of the SPCP, and over the next two years, the constitution and rules have been defined. Since then, several biennial boards, including gastroenterologists and surgeons, have guaranteed and contributed not only to developing the national Coloproctology, but also to inspire patient care, teaching, and research in this field. On the other hand, successive boards have been committed to promoting national and international networking, and to developing several educational activities for healthcare professionals, patients, and civil society. Over two days, we organize an Annual Conference, this year holding the 32nd

edition, which includes postgraduate courses, transdisciplinary panels, and diverse lectures. In addition, we have three annual Regional Meetings (in the north, center, and south of Portugal) aiming to promote GP doctors networking, update knowledge, and spread the Coloproctology concept within the medical community. Many other activities are also performed by the SPCP, including the establishment of high-quality national guidelines for the treatment of diseases within its scope, the publishing of original research papers, as well as by granting training programs, and supporting scientific research. We also honor the SPCP legacy by remembering its founding fathers, as 2023 witnessed the loss of its two first and most prominent members, namely Prof. Drs Amílcar Mascarenhas Saraiva and António Araújo Teixeira, a pioneer of Portuguese gastroenterology and a renowned national surgeon, respectively. Both made a decisive contribution to the development of the SPCP and medical wisdom in this field.

In recent years, the interest in coloproctology has been increasing, mostly because of a steady and ranged membership growth which ultimately represents a guarantee of dynamism and development. A thorough reflection on the SPCP's recent past has led to establishing a new era, aiming to achieve a solid promotion and spreading of Coloproctology and the Society abroad to strengthen relationships with other scientific societies, publicize the SPCP, establish institutional relations and collaborate in the organization of scientific events. By launching new sections, such as the *Case Report* and the *Paper of the Month*, we have encouraged scientific writing and dissemination of knowledge, as we have supported the issuance of regular and significant

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periodic publications. To this end, the monthly newsletter (SPCP News) was a good start, as a means of spreading diverse relevant topics within our community members.

There is great confidence that SPCP will keep expanding and increase its influence over the next years. As an interdisciplinary society, it will continue to extend our interests, by developing and updating guidelines, research tools, and new educational activities. Let us join the SPCP's new era with a renovated responsibility for the prevention and novel coloproctological treatments. Dedication is key to

excellence in clinical practice and research projects, but it also requires a collaborative method and an inclusive membership.

### References

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