Preface

At all times and in all places, diseases have occurred in a parallel manner to the history of mankind; likewise, in each place and at each time, men have devoted their lives to treat, study and investigate them; that is how knowledge has evolved. It is not possible to write the history of medicine pretending that current knowledge is only the result of what it was brought to us, or what we received from other latitudes; it is impossible to say that it is the truth. In fact, the truth is quite different: current knowledge is the result of the active interchange between cultures, as illustrated by Dr. Pamo, regarding the Spanish influence on the medical activities that Spain brought to the New World; he indicates in one of the chapters on this book, «In summary, the medicine that Spain brought to the New World was medieval; it was a humoral medicine, of bleedings and purges, probably not any better than the aboriginal medicine. In fact pre-Hispanic medicine was probably better since it counted with a variety of medicinal herbs. This was the reason why the Spanish Crown's main interest was to bring these plants to Spain in order to study them and, eventually, use them».

It has been said that today's medicine is evidence-based; however, that is how medicine has been all along, given that is the definition of science. This book deals with evidences, of how medicine has evolved in our country and how our physicians have contributed with evidences to the advancement of this science we all love. From the times of the Incas, and even before them, the trepanated skulls from the Mochica and Paracas civilizations, witnessed the attempts, advanced for the time, on how to treat diseases; the portrait ceramics also attest to the interest in medicine and how to represent it. Coca and quina have been valuable contributions to the therapeutic armamentarium on how to deal with diseases.

Notable contributions have been made by the work of Peruvians to the worldwide knowledge, from the study of Carrión and Barton in whose honor Bartonella is named and the studious of Mountain Sickness to the most recent contributions in the area of molecular biology of the relationship of rheumatoid arthritis and histocompatibility antigens of Statsný.

In Rheumatology, several Peruvian physicians have become prominent, occupying important positions in academic centers in Perú and abroad; some of them are no longer with us but have left their names engraved in the history of rheumatology and with it, have engraved also Perú's name. Others continue contributing to advancing our knowledge in rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, seronegative spondyloarthropathies, osteoarthritis and scleroderma, among others; such effort is the one we want to emphasize in the pages of this book, because their work makes all of us Peruvians, very proud. To acknowledge their disposition to always collaborate in the formation of newer generation of rheumatologists, their infatigable scientific and teaching activities of which we are the beneficiaries, we have put together this book.

It is difficult to travel through time without risking some omissions; this book is not complete, it does not pretend to be. It is possible that in the effort to gather information, persons who did quite a bit for medicine in our country, had not been mentioned in these book chapters; these lines are for them, to indicate that Peruvian medicine is the
result of all persons of all times who with dedication worked towards achieving the most important goal of medicine: the well being of our patients. Their names have not been included in publications and thus they cannot be found using electronic search engines; however, their names are engraved in gold, the gold of the Incas, in the unwritten history captured by grateful patients and relatives, and by many of us who now practice medicine.

This is also for the younger physicians, those who have started to write history, to inspire their hearths and motivate their minds and to indicate that we can strive to reach heights, without concerns as to where we are coming from, of whether we belong to the haves or the have-nots, because the world of medicine does not distinguish between first and third worlds.

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