

ARTICLE · CULTURA & SAÚDE

A Magazine Is Born on the Internet

The launch of Cultura & Saúde and the medical vocation as public spirit

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ABSTRACT

The author celebrates the launch of the magazine *Cultura & Saúde* on the internet, presenting it as a new opportunity for learning for the young physician. Throughout the text, he discusses the medical vocation as a feeling of public spirit and love for one's neighbor, cultivated from the school bench onward. He argues that being a physician is a condition that either exists or does not, comparing it to pregnancy, which is never partial. He describes the student's training, learning about life from death, living with pain and suffering, and permanently facing the challenge of deciding under threat to life, which demands continuous study. In this context, he situates the magazine as a vehicle for conveying the experience of modern medicine practiced in the daily routine of a general hospital and for opening young minds to the problems afflicting the population.

KEYWORDS: *medical vocation; medical education; medical ethics; physician training; cultura & saude; public spirit*

The public spirit is something that nourishes the soul of all those who, in their innermost being, feel an impulsive desire to help improve the quality of life of the community. Such a person sees the individual while also perceiving his family and his social group. No profession fosters this sentiment from the school bench as much as that of the physician. Indeed, throughout the entire undergraduate course this attitude is put to the test. It is worth noting that among all students there is not a single group in which this mark is not evident. This love for one's neighbor is, so to speak, a qualitative trait. Everyone understands it as a vocation. As such, it can be neither greater nor lesser, and so it either exists or it does not; the individual is a physician or he is not. Those who, at the very start of their studies, did not have such feelings changed course in time. To be clear, a very simple and convincing example: a woman is either pregnant or not; she is never a little pregnant or very pregnant. Thus, the entire medical class is made up of people "called" to the profession. This privilege is enduring: their strong impulse to do more for the patient, for the family, and for society. But beyond this, also for medical teaching, for the training of the novice, and for his improvement, always with the will to enhance and multiply the knowledge useful to

health. This fact is truly very significant if one recalls how the young are prepared, learning about life from death and remembering that anatomy is the plastic image of function; seeing the beauty of life in the function of each organ, and then, when study moves to the hospital, living day and night with pain and suffering and fighting desperately against death. No other profession takes part so intrinsically in human suffering as that of the physician. He learns to listen to another's pain in order to progressively interpret the patient's symptoms and to know how to seek the signs and to reason amid pain, anguish, and sadness. The challenge of death, posed at every moment, sharpens his acumen, his attention, his intelligence; he learns to make prompt decisions and knows that, if they are not correct, his error may cost his patient's life. Awareness of this fact keeps him permanently on alert, one that gives him no right not to know, since the courts themselves regard such a lapse as malpractice. Thus, the physician must study continuously. This is the very reason that prompted him to offer the young physician yet another opportunity to learn, over the internet, in the magazine now being launched: *CULTURA & SAÚDE*. The great merit of this magazine, in my view, is that it presents to the young physician the experience of modern medicine prac-

ticed day to day in a general hospital. In this way, it opens young minds to the problems that, at the present moment, afflict our people.