



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL REVIEW ON DOWN'S SYNDROME

www.elsevier.es/sd



EDITORIAL

30 years and a great future

A. Serés

Editor-in-Chief of International Medical Review on Down's Syndrome

Publicising its work and raising awareness as regards individuals with Down's syndrome, has been among the main aims of the Fundació Catalana de la Síndrome de Down since its creation. With this aim it regularly organises meetings and conferences with parents and educators, as well as International Conferences on Down's syndrome. In this twelfth edition of the Conference with the title "30 Years and a Great Future!", the Fundació attempts to update existing knowledge of professionals in our country and to demonstrate its extensive experience. For this reason, in this present edition, speakers from all over the world, leading personalities in their scientific fields, and with long recognised careers, have been invited to share their experiences with the delegates at the symposium. The inaugural conference was chaired by Emiliano Bruner, who talked about paleoneurology, a little known aspect of human evolution. Other professionals also took part in the Conference, among whom included Ignacio Calderón of Malaga, an expert in education, Isabel Guirao, founder of an association in Almeria, and Inés-Elvira de Escallón, who produced her work on inclusive education in Toronto, as well as, of course, those that work in the Fundació, all those individuals with many years of working in this field, and who describe their experiences to their colleagues. The exchange of ideas and experiences, as well as establishing collaboration links is the main purpose of the Conferences. Thus, it tries to reflect the philosophy of the Fundació, on the one hand with a long track record of accumulating experience in the treatment of people with Down's syndrome, and on the other hand to demonstrate that there are great prospects in the future for them.

Thirty years ago, when a child was born with Down's syndrome, their life prospects and the likelihood of social inclusion were very different from those of other children. Children with this syndrome were marginalised and had no possibility of being integrated, and followed a physical and intellectual development process with their own and unique characteristics, with a particular growth rate and with ex-



pectations for the future, like any other child. Fortunately, things have changed, and children born these days with Down's syndrome have similar prospects to the rest of the children, with a personalised development and full social integration, naturally taking advantage of all their possibilities, each one of them theirs.

Within the medical and health field, the aims established by the Fundació were clear. Thirty years ago these challenges and objectives seemed almost unreachable when the Fundació began its activities, it was unthinkable that we would achieve the levels of health that people with Down's syndrome have today. Neither was much thought given to the pathological conditions that the adults would have, but the reality changed that. Survival has notably improved and the level of disease associated to the syndrome has been drastically reduced in children and that associated with adults has increased. This has enabled these individuals to carry out a series of physical activities for many years and be fully integrated in the family environment. To achieve this, it has been necessary to offer very specialised care, creating and adapting existing health programs to their needs, as well as carrying out the appropriate follow-up in

applying these preventive medical care programs specific for people with Down's syndrome. This was the main reason for the creation of the Centre Mèdic Down in 1987.

Without a doubt, things have matured a lot in society in the last thirty years. Those that were children then are now adults that enjoy better social acceptance and a higher

level of health. On the other hand, children born nowadays have the most modern systems available to achieve the maximum that is on offer, a great future.

We hope that Conferences like these are an incentive for professionals and families in their work helping people with Down's syndrome.