

Toward a Greater Representation of Family Medicine in the National System of Researchers in Mexico

Hacia una mayor representatividad de la medicina familiar dentro del Sistema Nacional de Investigadores en México

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In Mexico, the National System of Researchers (SNI) plays a crucial role in recognizing and promoting high-quality scientific and technological research. This institution was established in 1984 to acknowledge the work of individuals dedicated to the generation and dissemination of knowledge in various fields.¹ Currently, around 43,000 researchers belong to this system, distributed across nine areas; Medicine and Health Sciences is one of them, with 4,753 members, of which only 24 are directly related to family medicine. This represents 0.5% of the total researchers in this area and less than 0.1% of the total family medicine specialists in the country.²

These data contrast with the importance of family medicine within primary health care in Mexico. Additionally, this lack of representation in the SNI not only limits the professional development of those involved in improving and strengthening family medicine in the country but also affects the perception of its importance in the scientific and medical community. This can affect the allocation of resources for research in this discipline, and impact the ability to innovate and improve primary care systems.

The representativeness of family medicine in the SNI is a crucial issue influenced by the role of specialized journals in this medical field. The three family medicine journals published in Mexico: *Archivos en Medicina Familiar*, *Revista Mexicana de Medicina Familiar*, and *Atención Familiar*, are among the main means of disseminating family medicine knowledge in the country. Additionally, they help validate and elevate the specialty profile as an integral, and fundamental discipline in the health system, highlighting the importance of their support, recognition, promotion, and strengthening.

Suggestion of quotation: López-Ortiz G. Toward a Greater Representation of Family Medicine in the National System of Researchers in Mexico. *Aten Fam.* 2024;31(3):135-136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22201/fm.14058871p.2024.388822>

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Publications like *Atención Familiar* provide an academic space for the presentation of new research, and play a fundamental role in enabling family medicine professionals to integrate and be recognized within the SNII. For instance, several researchers have been able to join this system, with their main scientific output being articles published in *Atención Familiar*. Therefore, in accordance with the importance of publications in this medical discipline, it is essential to improve editorial and scientific quality, and expand their scope and accessibility.

The focus should be on quality, transparency, and relevance rather than on the quantity of published research.^{3,4} Furthermore, research should be encouraged to be rigorous in methodological terms, innovative, and have clear practical implications for improving care systems.⁵ Achieving this will promote the advancement of the discipline and consolidate its importance in the medical field.

This implies a greater national effort involving universities, and institutions to promote the generation of high-quality knowledge in this medical specialty. This should consider practical and direct impact of family medicine research on community health and health care systems.⁶⁻⁸

Family medicine should have a greater presence in the SNII, reflecting its importance in the health system. Policies and practices must reflect this change to improve the population's health and ensure that Mexico is better prepared to face future health challenges.

Greater recognition of family medicine in the SNII could encourage more research in vital primary care areas, such as disease prevention, risk-focused ap-

proaches, comprehensive management of chronic diseases, mental health, and continuity of care.⁹⁻¹¹ Moreover, it would strengthen the formation of researcher networks who can collaborate on multidisciplinary projects, which would have significant impact on public health in Mexico.

In the last eight years, the number of people recognized in the SNII, and performing functions related to family medicine has increased by 100%.⁶ Although this figure shows significant progress, much remains to be done. To reach the trends of other countries, where the percentage of researchers in the medical field is around 2%,¹² we would need 436 more researchers in family medicine, almost 20 times more than the current number. This is a considerable challenge, but the importance and impact of family medicine fully justifies this effort.¹³⁻¹⁸

From the Subdivision of Family Medicine and *Atención Familiar*, we call on all actors related to this crucial medical discipline to join efforts so that more family physicians and related personnel can learn about and join the SNII, to promote research, and development of new medical practices. Collaboration between educational, health, and governmental institutions, and associations is crucial to achieve this objective. It is also essential that everyone share the responsibility of promoting family medicine, recognizing the impact that research has on improving medical care.⁸ Only through a joint and committed effort we will be able to guarantee a healthier, and more equitable future for all Mexicans.

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