

Articoli/Articles

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SKILL OF HEALING AT THE
HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF THE “HOSPITAL NACIONAL DE
CLÍNICAS DE CÓRDOBA – ARGENTINA”

NORMA ACERBI CREMADES

Museo Historia “Hospital Nacional de Clínicas” - Facultad de Ciencias Médicas
Universidad Nacional de Córdoba

SUMMARY

The Museum of History “Hospital Nacional de Clínicas”, from the National University of Cordoba, República Argentina, it's charged with the knowledge continuity of the Health Science, in time and space.

Its guiding motto says:

“I'll be a shield to stop the wind that wants to erase the imprint of men that shaped the history of the School of Medical Sciences by their work.”

To accomplish the tasks, general and particular objectives were settled. The Museum has a Library divided in three sections: Classical, Contemporary and Virtual. It counts with a specialized Information and Documentation Centre. Courses about different topics are given as well as the course of History of Medicine for Grade and post grade careers, completing with humanistic contents, the students education exclusively scientific and technical. For high school and Bachelor students there is a program called: “Education – Apprenticeship strategies at the Museum”. These strategies are arranged to fit the programmes and levels of formal education for educational institutions.

The heritage of the Museum consists of more than a thousand apparatus and tools that served the research and instruction at the different professorships of the School of Medical Sciences. Many of them obsolete they allow us to understand the evolution of science and technique, within the broad field of Health Science, since the creation of the School of Medical Sciences in 1877.

Key words: Pharmaceutical History - Museums in Universities - Multimedia Interpretation

Introduction

The progress of mankind depends to a great extent on the education and it's the most effective way to build the future. That's why Museums are becoming effective protagonists in the transmission of scientific technical and cultural knowledge¹.

The "Hospital Nacional de Clínicas" Museum of the National University of Cordoba, (Argentina) was created in December 21st, 1995 and focused its work to keep its collections open to research, the teaching staff and the dissemination of culture.

The National University of Cordoba (Argentina) created in 1613, has 16 Museums, most of them located within the Academic units that shape the university structure. All of them are united in the Net, since 1998.

The School of Medical Sciences was created October 10th, 1877 and has at present five Museums open actively to education².

An important thing is to concentrate in one place, the conditions that would allow bringing together the history of the past, the present and the vision of the future.

Evolution

The Museum and its dependencies: the Library and Archives are located within the Hospital Nacional de Clínicas "Dr. Pedro Vella". It's the first School-Hospital of the School of Medical Sciences, inaugurated in May 24th, 1913 and was distinguished as National Historical Monument in December, 1996.

The Museum was created in December 21st, 1995 in order to keep the scientific, technical and cultural evidence of the university evolution as well as its protagonists. Its motto is:

I'll be a shield to stop the wind that wants to erase the imprint of men that shaped the history of the Faculty of Medical Sciences by their work.

The University Museums have been performing a significant role as internal service to the University, training generations of students through the professorships that profit from their heritage to teach and research. However, when structural changes in education occur, the Museum transforms into an essential place, not accidental to achieve the educative goals for the developing of teaching programmes, enlarging evidently its action towards the community³.

The Museum has pre-established goals: General and Particular.

General Aims

As an educative institution, the Museum-Library and Archives, its general aims are: to collect, keep, restore, research, display and to communicate the scientific and medical heritage. The Museum owns more than a thousand apparatus and tools that were used for medical practice, the research and education at the different medicine professorships since the end of the XIX century and the first decades of the XX century.

These apparatus are placed according to their special field and they are linked to the work of the Teachers, among them: Manuel Albarenque, Luis Maximiliano Allende, Antonio Nores, Pablo Luis Mirizzi, Miguel Urrutia, Juan Martín Allende, Humberto Dionisi, Enrique Pedro Aznares, Carlos Aguirre and others.

There are some surgical, optical instruments as well as instruments for gynaecology that are still in use for the students to practice with. Instead, the obsolete ones make us think about the anxiety of an experiment, the difficulties already overcome and to understand the evolution of science with the advance of the technology.

Particular Aims

Academic

1. Teach Health Sciences at different student levels: university, secondary and tertiary levels. The visit to the Hospital

is the beginning to appraise its historical value, then to the Museum. By observing the materials separated according to their special field in each glass case and a theoretical explanation or a thoughtful reading of the panels may dispel doubts and shape new knowledge.

2. Encourage historical as well as technical-scientific research. The Museum with its Library and Archives is a laboratory (public space for study or practice), that allows the interaction between disciplines, and between the heritage and the educational community. The experimentation and research exist together within an academic environment, surrounded by instruments and pieces of equipment from different fields. The goal of the Museum is to make sure that all the collections can be used actively and not merely pieces of a prestigious past. Many grade and post grade works are created, directed and consolidated at the Museum, even more since 2000, when the School of Medical Sciences established the Annual Meetings of Scientific Research, and so encouraging the Faculty and students the desire to compete with original works in searching and discovering.

Scientific-Cultural

1. Discussion Meetings

Monthly meetings of one hour duration to talk about history subjects: Philosophy, Bioethics, science or art. The invited speakers are university professors, with a wide experience on the subjects.

2. Meetings about the History of Medicine

It is a subject of a great informative-formative value, which provides the humanistic bases by general knowledge of philosophy, ethics and general culture and gives a high rank to the practice for the professionals at Health Sciences.

Boundary marks are given much importance since the pre-history up until nowadays and the work of the Benefactors of Humanity and also the correlation between old and today illnesses, medical terminology and therapy measures still valid.

The course, which is theoretical-practical, takes 46 hours and develops an official programme of fifteen units. An 80% of attendance is required, a monograph about a subject previously proposed and a final written evaluation.

3. Exhibitions

Exhibitions of art, photography or posters about scientific work have taken place at the Museum. We consider that the Art and the way of expression of many professionals that are authors and exhibitors of important works putting together science with art, is fundamental for Health Sciences. Besides the permanent exhibitions of instruments and apparatus, there are temporary exhibitions to interconnect the curricular contents with the collections of the Museum. The temporary exhibitions are generally held at the aisles of the Hospital to get a bigger audience among a heterogeneous crowd. We try to make them up to date and exciting like the ones at the Museum itself especially in the week of May 18th to commemorate the International Day of Museums: this event connects us even more to the community, making possible training for future users.

4. Theatre

In a cultural life of a society, the theatre has a great value. We have made use of the theatre to transmit precautionary measures by short plays about Abortion and AIDS, two important issues. After the play, the multidisciplinary panel of experts gets together interacting with the audience in order to clarify the concepts about these two big social-medical problems.

Extension

1. Modernization and Improvement Courses

The courses are devoted to university audience and public in general, about different topics:

- Preservation and conservation of the cultural heritage by written works.
- Writing and planning scientific works.
- The Library and the Archives like centres of information at the Museum.
- Directory for Health Sciences Museums.
- The importance of medical humanities.
- The use of Museums within the School and as centre of hereditary education.
- Medicine Teachers from Cordoba.

2. Teaching support

It's carried out for other branches of the science, not directly related to the Health Sciences. Questions are very varied, among the students and the teaching staff from Architecture, Tourism, Communications Sciences and others.

3. Calendar of important dates and monthly activities

It's located on the wall near the entrance of the Hospital, to remember important events or humanity Benefactors, and also to inform about the inner activities of the Museum: conferences, exhibitions, discussion meetings, and courses.

Communication in the Museum

The process of communication is made for two kinds of audiences.

1. *Active audience*: represented by specific university high school or bachelor level groups. They visit the Museum in

groups of 25–30 students, accompanied by their teachers. There is an effective interaction with them.

2. *Passive audience*: public in general, families or people coming because interested in the history of the Hospital and its protagonists. Others are patients, without previous motivation or just want to know something else about the illness they suffer.

For both audiences (active and passive), “*lessons with objects*” are given and we consider them of great usefulness because they allow a development of sensitive and perceptive capacities along with abilities to think about and judgement⁴.

Another way to impart knowledge is by the development of what we call: “Strategies of Teaching – Learning at the Museum”. It’s a set of propositions, adjusted to the educational formal programmes from other educative institutions⁵.

The topics are: history, microbiology, optics, bioethics, medicinal plants, sexual contact illnesses, drug addiction and others.

Library

A specialized library is essential for the development of the Museum activities. We have classical works from the XVI and XIX centuries and the contemporary ones, to read at the reading room, they can be taken home or borrowed between libraries. There is a sector for doctoral Thesis and a periodical collection with specialized magazines and offprints of scientific works.

It’s a study centre and a custody place, with an active nature of keeper of the documentary and administrative fonts to support the teaching staff and research.

Archive

The Documentary Archive in the Historic Museum has a double importance.

- it furnishes evidence of scientific knowledge, evolution and growth
- is a communication transmitter between the professionals and the public that visiting the museum.

Information Management at the Museum

The Historic Museum is using Internet technology, which transforms radically the relationship between the Museum and its audience.

The website (www.museohnc.fcm.unc.edu.ar) is available in three languages: Spanish, French and English, it:

1. Gives information about history, resources and functioning.
2. Unloads educative material for students and teachers.
3. Interchanges information with other Museums.

On the other hand the Information Management allows us:

1. Web registration of objects, books and documents.
2. Codification in sequence.
3. Donations registration.
4. The follow up of the restorations.
5. The Project to export the Bases to the Web.

Marketing at the Museum

The marketing is necessary in order to make the heritage known and to better manage the educative institution: the Museum-Library and the Archive. This is possible through:

1. Notice board and brochures. Advertising posters about courses, meetings, hours of work.
2. Organizing events (Photograph show, plastic arts, theatre, lectures).

3. Advertising in local newspapers.
4. Publishing books, including the works of the members of the Museum.
5. Calendar.

Conclusion

At the XXI Century, a Health Sciences Museum (no matter if it belongs to the University, to the province, to the town or the nation), should communicate:

- a. its task to preserve the heritage;
- b. its research duties;
- c. its management to generate knowledge.

The Museum must be a dynamic institution in the service of the community. On the other hand, through many learning experiences, it can help young people define their vocation. Some other times, it could get good mediators with other educative institutions.

To achieve its aims, the Museum must:

- Attract new audience
- Incorporate new information technologies
- Offer permanent cultural marketing strategy
- Offer Web integration with other Museums
- Organize fluent communication with authorities it belongs to.

The Museum of History of Hospital Nacional de Clínicas, with its Library and Archive, it's an ambience where it's possible to learn and develop abilities in Health Sciences thriving with its heritage the teaching staff and students different educative levels. Its doors and collections are permanently open to all society.

Museum's Instruments



Fig. 1 - Heart-lung pump (DE BAKEY type) - Received at the Hospital in 1962



Fig. 2 - Portable Electrocardiograph- stethoscope - With a transformer Brand: Cambridge instrument C.O. Inc. N° 0208768 – 1940

A journey through the skill of healing



Fig. 3 - Historical Museum of National Clinicas Hospital



Fig. 4 - Midwife's bag – 1818

Norma Acerbi Cremades



Fig. 5 - Mould to manufacture seals – 1913

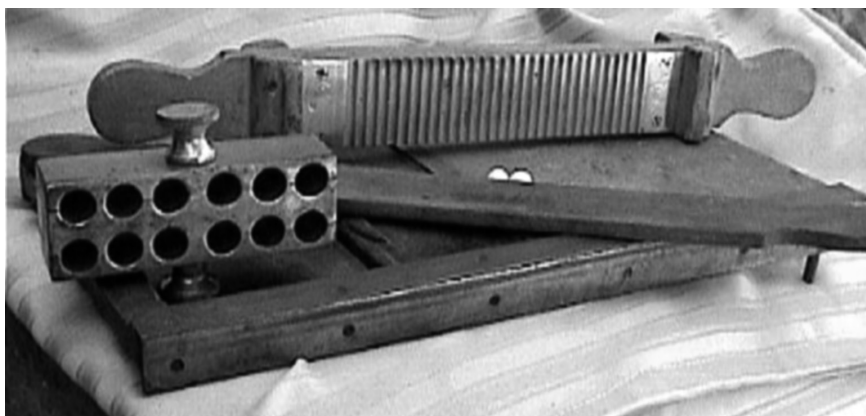


Fig. 6 - Moulds to manufacture suppositories and pills – 1913

A journey through the skill of healing



Fig. 7 - Surgical environment where “classes” with objects are given (Scientific instruments and apparatus)



Fig. 8 - First contact sclerocorneal lenses and ophthalmoscope created by Von Helmholt in 1851

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES

1. SANTANA MESTRE J. *Serrat Antoli, N. Museografía Didáctica Editorial*. A&M Grafic S.L. – Barcelona. 2005.
2. GARZÓN MACEDA F., *Historia de la Facultad de Ciencias Médicas*. Cordoba, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1927.
3. AGUILERA VILLALBA M. del C., *Vamos al Museo. Guías y recursos para visitar los Museos*. Madrid, Nancea, 1998.
4. DEWEY J., *Educational Function of Museum of Decorative Art and Chronicle of the Museum for the Art of Decoration of Cooper Union*. 2004; 3: 93–99.
5. COMBS H., PROSSER R.C., AHMED M., *New Paths to Learning: for rural children and youth*. International Council for Educational Development. New York, Publication Essex, 1973.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Prof. Dr. Norma Acerbi Cremades, Museo Historia “Hospital Nacional de Clínicas”, Facultad de Ciencias Médicas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Santa Rosa 1564 – Córdoba – CP: 5000 – Republica Argentina

Tel: (+54 351) 4337014 ext 112

Mail: museohnc@hotmail.com Web: www.museohnc.fcm.unc.edu.ar