

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

This issue of our journal is a veritable kaleidoscope, featuring almost all facets of the ever-changing, polyhedral field of knowledge formed by the intersection of history with other sciences and health. Let us first look at the pages devoted to submissions.

The biophysicist Darcy Fontoura de Almeida analyzes the reasons behind Carlos Chagas Filho's decision to shift away from his father's and brother's line of research – tropical pathology – and dedicate himself instead to the physics and chemistry of life processes, not at the institute that his father, Carlos Chagas, had long headed but within the university, at a time when academe was becoming an important space for scientific research.

Ariadne Chloë Furnival and Sônia Maria Pinheiro, both information scientists, investigate the public's perception of the risks that GM crops present in the food chain, above all to our health and the environment. They also show how the public has been shut out of decision-making processes. Gabriela Marques Di Giulio, Newton Müller Pereira, and Bernardino Ribeiro de Figueiredo, researchers working in the environment and the geosciences, probe the perceptions and attitudes of residents of a city in Paraná who were exposed to serious lead contamination, in order to explore how the media influence the social construction of risk. The authors note how responses to this risk situation involved the interaction of psychological, social, institutional, and cultural processes.

Virginia Bentes Pinto, who also works with IT, offers her thoughts on different models for handling and organizing images, with a view to recovering information and applying the models to the health field.

Carolina Biernat and Karina Ramacciotti, scholars of the State and society, analyze how government tutelage of mothers and children was organized in Argentina during the between-war years and under Peronism. They focus on proposals for reducing child mortality, the type of technical staff hired to enforce these proposals, and the limitations that hampered both policy and its agents.

Readers of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* know that one of the journal's thematic concerns is disciplines and institutions in the realm of mental illness. The anthropologist Luís Quintais presents us with a very original study on Portuguese psychiatry at the close of the nineteenth century. He employs the concept 'degeneration' as the guiding thread in examining experiences that were then described as threats to a certain view of the social and political order.

The suicide of slaves during the final decades of slavery is the topic of the article by doctors Saulo Veiga Oliveira and Ana Maria Galdini Raimundo Oda, who based their study primarily on newspaper articles published in *Gazeta de Campinas* (1871-1887).

The historian Alarcon Agra do Ó, whose fine article on Thomas Lindley appeared in v.11, no.1, of this journal, now addresses sociologist Norbert Elias's contributions to an understanding of the contemporary experience of old age, drawing a relationship between it and the very invention of modernity.

This issue of our journal includes two Research Notes. Nelson Senra, author of a recently published essential text on the history of statistics in Brazil, provides a most useful inventory of topics and sources for those interested in delving into this little-explored area in the history of sciences and health in Brazil. The note by entomologist Jane Costa and co-authors talks about the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz's Entomological Collection, one of the oldest and richest in Latin America. It suffered serious damage during the so-called Massacre of Manguinhos, one of the dark moments lived under Brazil's former military dictatorship.

The second part of this issue features the dossier Transmission of Science and Scientific Legacy: Europe and Latin America, edited by the Mexican historian Sonia Lozano. Written by historians, psychologists, sociologists, and specialists in the chemical and biological sciences, these seven studies were originally presented at a symposium held in Castellón in 2005, as part of the 14th International Congress of the Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos (AHILAE), and at the 52nd International Congress of Americanists, which took place the following year in Seville.

Jaime Benchimol
Editor