

Letters to the Editor

Authors' reply: Spanish or English in scientific reporting

Key words: Gastrostomy. Publication.

Dear Editor,

We thank Professor Culebras Fernandez his letter (1) and his praise to the content of our recently published narrative review on percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (2). A systematic review of the literature would have required a search in multiple languages, as we recently did for other research (3).

Aware of the diffusivity of English language in Science, an increasing number of professional and scientific journals from varied geographical origin, including many from Arab countries, India and Singapore, have adopted English as language for publication in order to provide their contents with an improving visibility. This same strategy was followed by the *Spanish Journal of Gastroenterology* (*Revista Española de Enfermedades Digestivas* or *REED*) for all its contents several decades ago. As a result, the Web of Science search provided by the Professor in his letter reveals that all the documents published on endoscopic gastrostomy in *REED* since 1993 are written in English. In fact, our journal has been publishing all its contents in English since 2000, and only 8 out of the 36 documents historically published on this topic are exclusively available in Spanish. Among them, that published in 1985 by Professor Culebras et al. (4) regarding the first use in our country of the technique originally developed by Gauderer and Ponsky (5). We had the opportunity to read this paper thanks to the kindness of people in charge of the historic library of the Spanish Society Digestive Diseases. We are

grateful to its author for focusing our attention on this pioneering work, which certainly would have deserved more attention than the 2 references it has received after 30 years of publication. In contrast to what happens with *REED*, only 4 out of the 18 indexed documents on the same topic included in the journal *Nutrición Hospitalaria* are written in English, all of them coming from foreign authors. A PubMed search with the term "endoscopic gastrostomy" yields today 4,235 documents, most of them (3,550) written in English, and very few in other languages (only 97 in Spanish, 102 in French and 190 in German). For this reason, we have lost no opportunity of retrieving relevant information to be included in our review article by restricting our search to the English literature. We share with Dr. Culebras a deep love for our Spanish language, but nevertheless we must recognize the superiority of English as the language of scientific dissemination beyond the aforementioned imbalance in US databases to prioritize content in English language. Science is distinguished from other knowledge by the fact that scientist are obliged to disseminate their results, and certainly English is now the preeminent language for this purpose, taking the place that belonged to German language in former times, and even before to French. In the highly competitive scientific field, the publication in a foreign language to achieve greater visibility and impact represents an additional effort (not always recognized and valued) that improves the global influence of Spanish sciences and scientists, also enhancing the impact factor of the national journals in which they publish their research.

Finally, we appreciate the information on the latest paper referenced by Professor Culebras and published in the journal he edits. It refers to a gastrostomy tube placed with ultrasound support, without using endoscopy (6). While this document written in English could have been retrieved in our search, it was out of the focus of our review article on endoscopic techniques, and would have not selected.

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