

RESPONSE TO THE LETTER TO THE EDITOR: **On the Management Board of the 10th Conference on Prison Health of Barcelona**

I've taken some days before replying the Letter to the Editor sent by Dr. Arroyo. I took some days because of the appreciation I have for him. I was a member of the Selection Board where he was appointed member of the Prison Health Department and I have backed him –and still do– on the rewarding project of the Spanish Journal of Prison Health. In both cases, with great admiration for his capability and spirit. It is not quite clear to me how my speech deserved that Letter and moreover in the terms and tone with which it was developed by Jose Manuel. I firmly believe that I already answered his questions and points of view during the open discussion which took place during the Conference. That was the place to do so and the kind discussion on two diverging points of view should have been ended there.

By taking the debate outside its natural setting and providing value judgments on what happened during the Conference may lead some of those who did not attend the meeting to a biased version of what in fact took place. This is the reason why I have decided to reply the Letter to the Editor. Warned readers should draw their own conclusions.

The first thing that strikes us is the long-standing unhealthy practice of Madrid's prison health directors to say what SESP Conference Scientific Committees should and shouldn't do. With old experience about these conflicts I can say that we have suffered and dealt with it in the best way possible. I thought that this belonged to the past, to "historical times", but I drearily see how even prepared valuable people do not escape the "*Alcala syndrome*". Is there a cure?

In relation to everything else I ratify what I said. Prison Health stakeholders should lead the integration

process and demand the adherence to the law. I do not believe that this has been or is the case. Without bitterness, without a warmongering attitude, with respect. But I do not believe so. I am not acquainted with the strategic plan of the General Directorate to get the laws to be obeyed. I asked Dr. Arroyo for this plan, for the measures that the General Directorate was taking to achieve the integration. Answer: the ball lies in the Autonomous Communities court. That is not a bad plan for not achieving the integration.

Otherwise I do not believe it to be melancholic to demand the law to be obeyed and the natural leader to assume its role. I have not been set apart from Prison Health for decades either, I still collaborate with everything that I'm requested and from my working position I try to enhance the prestige of a job which is of huge value for public health. However what is still more surprising is that the reasons for the transitory disposition and thereby exposed. With some memory it is easy to remember who covered all healthcare departments, all national and autonomic parliaments and who knocked on the doors of all political parties to get that transitory disposition, which according to everybody was impossible and did not belong to the Act on Cohesion. Jose Manuel joined me on some visits and opened the doors of the Health Department and of political parties in Aragon. He had a fist-hand live experience of how the tenacity, the power of conviction, the work and the effort of some made the impossible become possible. Indeed the situation now is better, that is why inaction is so inexplicable... or is it not?

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