



## EDITORIAL

# THE COLOMBIAN SECTION OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS (ACOG) AND VOLUNTARY RECERTIFICATION

**T**he Colombian Federation of Associations of Obstetrics and Gynecology (*La Federación Colombiana de Asociaciones de Obstetricia y Ginecología*—FECOLSOG) has been working on establishing academic and scientific links with scientific and professional societies throughout the continent during the last few years to strengthen and diversify academic opportunities required by Colombian gynaecologists, within Colombia and outside it.

Ongoing work which has been carried out together with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) during the last 3 years aimed at creating the Colombian section of ACOG was consolidated on the 26th February this year. The aforementioned section was eventually formed with 40 founding members (gynaecologists from all over Colombia) who participated in a final meeting with ACOG representatives. From this moment on, and after receiving official approval from ACOG's president's office, all gynaecologist-obstetricians who were FECOLSOG members could become affiliated to ACOG through the Colombian section, as has been done in Central-America and Chile.

There are two basic requirements for becoming affiliated to ACOG: taking and passing an examination which is aimed at evaluating the educational objectives considered necessary for a gynaecologist-obstetrician and having graduated from a university which has received FECOLSOG – ACOG accreditation. During the first two years, and whilst developing both processes, all FECOLSOG gynecologist-obstetricians may request becoming affiliated, making them Fellows of the ACOG and having the right to the advantages

enjoyed by Fellows of ACOG (FACOG). These would include:

- Access to the members' section on the site in the ACOG network
- Annual clinical meeting
- Audiovisual programmes
- Recertification programme
- Members directory
- Notice of coding / economic notices
- Educational material and opinions regarding advances in clinical practice
- Donations / grants / prizes
- Perinatal attention guidelines
- Guidelines for providing women's medical attention
- Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP)
- Interactions
- Insurance plans (low-cost)

A wide variety of publications is offered to members as part of ACOG's ongoing commitment to education:

1. **Obstetrics & Gynecology**, also known as the "Green Journal", Obstetrics & Gynecology is ACOG's official journal
2. **ACOG Clinical Review**. This bi-monthly newsletter includes synopses of selected current literature in the field of gynaecology and obstetrics. The newsletter also provides a yearly review of the annual Board of Obstetrics and Gynaecology certification examination.
3. **Primary Care Update Journal** provides current information regarding women's primary and preventative attention.
4. **ACOG Today (bulletin)**. This monthly publication features timely information on ASOG activities

and programmes and the most current issues in the specialty. A full page is devoted to the special interests of Junior Fellows

**5. Compendium of selected ACOG publications.**

The compendium is a compilation of selected ACOG guidelines on clinical practice. It is an invaluable reference to the specialisation's essential areas. It includes documents containing committees' opinions, educational and technical bulletins, bulletins on practice and practice patterns.

**6. ACOG members' directory.** This is published every two years and consists of an updated list of all members, including a guide to ACOG functionaries and committees.

**7. A division of ACOG for topics regarding women's health** offers members resources about topics such as access to attention for the less privileged, medical attention for adolescents, preventing pregnancy, domestic violence and other special topics.

**8. ACOG Resource Centre.** The Association's library offers courtesy searches in MEDLINE, photocopies of articles from the collection and carries out research for ACOG members. The librarians provide help in finding and using resources in Internet.

**9. ACOG World Wide Web Site** provides a great wealth of information and support for the electronic community. Members can find the complete text of ACOG publications, as well as searches in MEDLINE and other medical databases.

**10. Opinions about ethics** consists of discussions and recommendations or informal correspondence to help members resolve ethical dilemmas found in gynaecological and obstetric practice.

**11. Booklets or pamphlets for patient education.** These usually concern various topics. Such pamphlets are available as guides answering patients' questions.

**12. Ongoing Professional Development Programme (Recertification Programme).**

This provides an annual list of ongoing medical education activities.

**13. Quality Evaluation Manual.** Its main objective is to support hospitals' gynaecology and obstetrics departments in evaluating the quality of the attention which they are providing.

Following these two years, the people who wish to join must present and pass the exam which is being developed by the FECOLSOG – ACOG Accreditation Committee and also have graduated from universities which have followed the accreditation process established by the committee, in line with ACOG recommendations. Such accreditation seeks to accompany and support postgraduate programmes so that residents on such courses fulfil the requirements (i.e. obtain the skills) which a gynecologist-obstetrician must comply with today.

Medical residents, from their first year onwards, may become affiliated to ACOG as Junior Fellows, thereby allowing them to enjoy the benefits at lower cost whilst finishing their specialisation programme. They may present the exam later on and become affiliated as Fellows.

FECOLSOG has also launched its Voluntary Gynecologist-Obstetrics Recertification Programme which seeks to ensure that gynaecologists have a broad variety of possibilities for keeping themselves up to date by means of academic activities adapted to different needs, according to the time available, the site of residence and each one's academic preferences. The concept of recertification has been promoted in several countries regarding the growing need for being kept up to date in a constantly changing profession which has immense social responsibility. We cannot afford to see recertification as being awkward and presenting us with difficulties but rather as a strategy for providing possibilities and tools which will help us to maintain a more competitive medical practice, having suitable quality standards, in a setting having increasingly greater competition (and a concomitant demand for skills), where such processes may become the differential factor in our favour.

FECOLSOG works for us.

**Jimmy Castañeda, M.D.**

President FECOLSOG