The first issue of AJFE

We are extremely pleased to share with you the first issue of the American Journal of Field Epidemiology (AJFE), a new online peer-reviewed academic journal of field epidemiology, a multilingual journal reviewed by peers of field epidemiologists of the American continent. The papers are published in the World Health Organization's official language of preference of the authors to facilitate dissemination. We felt that there is a need for an academic outlet that values field epidemiologic investigations and examination of much data available at an increased pace on topics that are relevant to control and prevent infectious and non-infectious conditions of an epidemic nature. For instance, Chéry *et al*. present in this issue a study based on 20,000 records of pregnant women and their babies, finding that obesity increased the risk of adverse birth outcomes and neonatal morbidity and mortality in Chile.

The world has changed considerably since 2019, due to the largest and deadliest pandemic since Spanish influenza and HIV. In many ways, epidemiology and public health have suffered through the pandemic. The growing disinformation fueled by fake news on the internet, and the impaired functionality of states and governments, have resulted in a lack of public support for and mistrust in science and public health. Our journal (Cf. the *Lessons Learned* section) with the support of the Colombian National Institute of Health hosted a well-attended virtual seminar on the epidemiology and control of COVID-19 on the continent on December 12, 2022. Speakers from Colombia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic discussed the lessons learned from the perspective of those on the frontlines of the response, and panelists emphasized the importance of preparation, a trained public health workforce, and competence in public health communication. Two reports in this issue, one from the Dominican Republic (Ramírez *et al*.), the second from El Paso, Texas (Cárdenas, *et al.*), illustrate the place of serologic surveys and the evaluation of COVID-19 data. A study by Oladimeji *et al*. with the local health department in Houston, Texas, found that most healthcare providers of nursing homes were hesitant to provide COVID-19 vaccination in early 2021, placing this highly susceptible population at avoidable risk. The Houston Health Department used this evidence to launch specific educational campaigns.

Lima *et al.* presents evidence of waterborne transmission of toxoplasmosis among logging industry workers, and Ferguson present the results of the analysis of a hospital-based surveillance system of congenital malformations in Panamá from 2013-2020, documenting the presence of macrocephaly, which was expected given that the study period overlapped with that of the large Zika pandemic. However, the author found lower figures of prevalence of birth defects than expected.

The *Trainer's Corner* section features a short article with tips on how to develop timelines to visualize important relations in the course of epidemics.

We hope you enjoy reading this inaugural issue and that you will submit your manuscripts for review and publication in the AJFE.

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