Surviving a Scientific Poster Competition: My First Success as Event Organizer and Participant

Camacho Moreno José Antonio
SOCEM UNISON
joseantoniocamachomareno@gmail.com

"Gratitude is the memory of the heart."

As I reflect on the 2nd Local Scientific Poster Competition, I recall the many uncertainties I faced when planning began. When I started my role as Local Officer for Medical Publications (LOMP), the only scheduled activity was the Poster Competition. This was to be its second edition, held during the Regional Medicine Congress in Ciudad Obregón, Sonora, in October, organized by the Medical Student Society (SEM).

I began with significant doubts about how to manage the logistics, as I had never participated in a poster competition or completed a systematic review. My fear stemmed from my lack of knowledge at the time. Over time, I dedicated myself to learning about systematic reviews, creating a brief guide, and gradually asking how to carry out the activity. Here, I must express my gratitude to Abril Osobampo, a former LOMP, who organized the first edition of this competition.

Whenever I had questions, she would resolve them, providing a "how-to" guide for running the competition, suggesting ideas, advising me on whom to approach for securing judges, and offering assistance on the day of the event.

To prepare participants, in August we hosted the lecture “The Importance of Systematic Reviews,” delivered by Abril Osobampo. Later, the call for submissions was published. In October, Rodrigo Quintana, Capacity Building Coordinator for the national SCOMP, conducted the training “The Winning Poster.” These activities were instrumental for participants, as they covered key points for competing in the event.

During the preparation period, I worked closely with Maryelba Soto, SEM president and an active SCOMP member. I am deeply grateful to her for granting us a space within the Congress. I never imagined how much effort is involved in student society activities. It was a valuable learning experience to organize calls for submissions, manage official letters, and draft certificates. For this, I am especially thankful to María Inés Flores, SEGE at SOCEM UNISON, who offered suggestions and helped with the administrative paperwork.

The theme of the Congress was “Transcribing the X Chromosome,” focusing on prevalent diseases in women.Consequently, the systematic reviews aligned with this theme, and the jury was composed of female researchers. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Jael Teresa de Jesús Quintero Vargas, Lic. Sandra Miranda Mauricio, and Dr. Rocío Milagro López López for their participation, insights, and contributions to the event.

What I enjoyed most during the process was the communication I had with participants. Many were not part of SCOMP, yet they demonstrated remarkable interest and dedication in preparing their submissions. I also appreciated the opportunity to get to know SCOMP members better, discussing their systematic reviews and their ideas for the society. Reading each article, providing feedback, and watching the posters evolve from design to final print was incredibly rewarding.

On the day of the competition, I was nervous. Everything felt like it was moving too quickly, which at times overwhelmed me. I am immensely grateful to Josué Portillo, Abril Osobampo, and Lizbeth García, who supported me throughout the event. While I cannot fully imagine the individual experiences of the participants, I was delighted to hear members of the committee describe this as their favorite activity.

A total of eight posters were presented. The winning entry was titled “Systematic Review of Tubal Ectopic Pregnancy: Evaluation of Salpingostomy and Salpingectomy in Fertility Preservation and Recurrence Prevention.” It was dedicated to Helen Adriana Rodriguez Espinoza, a medical student from Campus Cajeme who tragically passed away at the age of 24 due to medical negligence.

On April 9, 2024, Helen sought care at the General Hospital in Ciudad Obregón with an initial diagnosis of "acute abdominal pain with possible ruptured ectopic pregnancy." She was denied medical attention due to her social security coverage and sought help at the Ciudad Obregón IMSS hospital, where she was classified as a "yellow code" and refused care. Helen suffered four cardiac arrests, the last of which caused her death. She passed away just days before she was to receive her medical degree (1).

Raising awareness in society is vital for the progression of our community. Activities like this competition serve to honor injustices, reminding us of the challenges that persist. The winning poster addressed a topic that deeply affected our university community, and presenting this information with respect and clarity is profoundly meaningful.

While there is room for improvement, this activity allowed me to grow professionally and become part of something greater within my university community, which was deeply gratifying. I am incredibly grateful for this experience.