



Editorial

[Translated article] A quarter of a century of the VIH-SEFH group: Transforming care, facing challenges and reaffirming commitment



Un cuarto de siglo del grupo VIH-SEFH: Transformando la atención, afrontando retos y reafirmando el compromiso

“With the strength of our members, we will continue for many more years”¹. So ended the editorial commemorating the first decade of one of the benchmark working groups for the hospital pharmacy profession in Spain: the Human Immunodeficiency Virus-Spanish Society of Hospital Pharmacy (VIH-SEFH) group. The arrival of the group’s 25th anniversary highlights significant changes in the landscape: HIV disease management is completely different, patient profiles have evolved, and the healthcare system itself has transformed. In fact, the world as a whole is different from the one we knew at the beginning of the century. Did we fail to anticipate this?² Perhaps we were mistaken in some of our predictions, and terms that are now part of our everyday jargon (e.g., stratification, motivational interviewing, telepharmacy) were not part of the working protocols, internal procedures, and methodologies we used previously. It didn’t matter. For this group, nonconformity in care and professional leadership have been key characteristics of its identity and the driving force behind its progress. Facing these changes has required the foundations we stood on to give way, allowing stronger ones to replace them³. The gestation and birth of something better made it necessary to forget what was more familiar but no longer sufficient. The concerns of the past have been fundamental to the evolution of the collective, even to its own survival. Standing still would not only have been detrimental to the group, it would have led to its dissolution^{4,5}. Moving forward became essential and the road we have travelled has brought us closer to the standards of modern pharmaceutical care.

The group’s track record in its 3 areas of work—teaching, research, and healthcare—speaks for itself. However, while it is true that we cannot confuse track record with excellence, or even time invested with optimal effectiveness, for obvious reasons, it is indeed possible to assert that their efforts have led to success in both of these areas.

Let’s begin with teaching, which has always been one of the fundamental pillars. Thus, in the 25 years of the group’s existence, we have never failed to celebrate our annual conferences, which took place virtually even during the worst days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of professionals, many of them still undergoing Specialised Health Training in Pharmacy (FIR), have participated in these events, which have served as a means of transmitting the best knowledge accumulated over the years and as a source of inspiration for individual and collective improvements, fostering the possibility of strengthening ties between generations and different professionals.

Much of the information shared at the conferences has been generated by the most outstanding research projects that the group has led

and developed throughout its existence, particularly the multicentre studies. During this quarter of a century, studies such as POINT⁶, MAS-VIH⁷, DISPIMDINAC⁸, and others of great relevance have acted as a means to demonstrate not only the strength and unity of the group, but above all, and more importantly, the improvement in health outcomes that hospital pharmacy has brought to patients and to healthcare in general⁹.

When the most experienced professionals also choose to leverage talent and partnerships, both internally and externally, the profession is destined to improve its skills and capabilities. Moreover, if these improvements are accompanied by the highest quality standards, success is guaranteed and this is what has been achieved in the development of numerous guidelines (stratification, quality indicators, adherence, de-prescription, etc.) that have been generated over this long period^{10,11}.

Furthermore, we are proud that our group has served as a mirror for others to evolve in our image and likeness. However, not everything can be good news or indicate a promising future. We are aware that this disease no longer attracts young people as much as it did in the past, nor are the human, material, and economic resources the same; in fact, they may be fewer. However, in this new era in which we live, with an increasingly ageing patient population on the one hand, and the reality of new technologies and the dual care environment on the other, the contribution of pharmacists is becoming ever more crucial. There is still ample opportunity for future generations to build and develop their careers.

Finally, we would like to thank the outstanding professionals who have passed through this group, some of them exemplary role models for the profession. They have all acted as game changers and have been instrumental in ensuring that the group has remained fully relevant, while adding value, transforming care, and meeting the challenges that have allowed us to reach what is undoubtedly the era of optimised pharmacotherapy in the management of patients living with HIV infection. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge and highlight the collaborative efforts with other scientific societies (especially GESida and SEIside), governmental institutions (National HIV/AIDS Plan), and patient associations (Apoyo Positivo, Adhara, CESIDA, GTT, etc.). We have learned from everyone, enjoyed the shared experiences, and engaged in reflection and self-criticism in the light of your contributions. We would also like to acknowledge the pharmaceutical industry for its support of the group in various projects over the past quarter of a century.

At this point, we have no desire to continue for many more years. On the contrary. We would like to see the group conclude its journey and leave behind a lasting legacy. This would be the clearest sign that this disease, once lethal and now chronic, has come to an end. The cure would have been found and all the work would have been accomplished. In the meantime, let the present and future generations attest that this group transformed pharmaceutical care, overcame every challenge it faced, and consistently reaffirmed its commitment for as long as needed. What we have experienced has been exciting, but what remains to be lived will undoubtedly be even more so. With the strength of our members, we will succeed.

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