“Studies in the field of dentistry are no longer restricted to the oral cavity”
An interview with Dr Maria Fidelia de Lima Navarro, new President of the International Association of Dental Research

Javier Martinez de Pison
DT Latin America

The election of Dr de Lima Navarro, Dean of the Bauru Dental School at the University of Sao Paolo, as President of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) is considered a great recognition of the high level of dental research in Brazil.

Dental Tribune Latin American Editor-in-Chief Javier Martinez de Pison spoke with Dr de Lima Navarro about the significance of her election as president of the largest dental research organisation in the world and the upcoming IADR congress in Barcelona.

Javier Martinez de Pison: Dr de Lima Navarro, you are the first Latin American researcher to be elected IADR President. How did you reach this position?
Dr de Lima Navarro: Before being appointed President of IADR, I had worked in various areas of the association. I was President of the Brazilian Division from 1994 to 1995, Member-at-Large of the Board from 1995 to 1999, a member of the Membership and Recruitment Committee, and Chair of the Regional Development Program.

Through these diverse positions, I came to know the association and relate to colleagues from around the world. I believe this experience, coupled with the fact that there was no American candidate in the race, and the prospects of the 2012 IADR General Session in Rio de Janeiro, were instrumental in my election.

What are your priorities as President of IADR?
My goal is to reduce inequities and improve the quality of dental research worldwide. Collaboration amongst different research groups is one way to achieve this, but in order to effect significant changes we need to influence government leaders. I also intend to visit the various regions of the IADR, participate in local meetings, make myself available to members, and help as much as I can.

A record number of abstracts were submitted for this year’s IADR congress in Barcelona. Why is that?
I believe we first have to thank the incumbent President Prof. David Williams, who urged all IADR members to face the challenges of the global financial crisis and actively participate in IADR meetings. Another reason is the great program compiled by IADR’s Scientific Group and Network Officers, and by the organizing committee, which certainly motivated members to submit abstracts.

The 88th General Session of the IADR and the 5th General Session of the Pan European Region of the IADR will be preceded by a full-day symposium on Global Oral Health Inequalities: The Research Agenda on 15 July.

Thereafter from 14 to 17 July, the following programme will be presented: 32 symposia

What abstracts are the most interesting in your opinion?
Over 5,500 abstracts were submitted, covering all areas of dentistry, from basic to applied research. They were reviewed and selected by the IADR’s Scientific Group and Network Officers, which conduct thorough and important work for our association.

The selected papers will present recent advances in basic studies of molecular biology, tissue engineering, bioactive materials, restorative materials with suitable properties for use in the oral cavity, clinical events, randomised controlled studies on various diseases, the performance of various restorative techniques, and the influence of social determinants on health disparities in the world’s population.

I am glad to see that studies in the field of dentistry are no longer restricted to the oral cavity, but are being extended to include the patient’s general health.

Thank you very much for the interview.

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The new President of IADR, Dr Maria Fidelia de Lima Navarro, at the organisation’s 2009 international congress in Miami. (DT/JPhoto courtesy of Jan. Logastis)