

# EDITORIAL

## Panorama of health marketing in Latin America

Panorama de la mercadotecnia en salud en Iberoamérica

Panorama do marketing em saúde na América Latina

Panorama du marketing de la santé en Amérique Latine

Nery Suárez Lugo

The complexity of health problems, both in origin and cause, as well as in the way of solving them, leads to the need for a holistic approach for analysis, in which various medical and social sciences are intertwined to fulfill the task of achieve well-being in the population. The transition from the biological to the social approach in health leads to a change in the way of thinking and acting, to which the marketing approach can contribute as a strategy to facilitate such a process. Marketing applied to health Marketing in its social approach, is governed by ethical principles and has a wide range of application to health. It is a tool for health activity, which by appropriating it, allows bringing to the market medicines, medical instruments and technologies with a rational approach, offering and reorienting services, reconciling the objectives and purposes of the institution with those of the patient-user, to achieve both ends. Its effectiveness in changing the behavior of the population that is required to achieve its well-being has been demonstrated and has a wide range of application in promoting health and promoting healthy lifestyles, designing and implementing health programs. The business management of health management with the application of marketing in both services and programs, does not mean in any way to market it, nor is this the approach advocated, but to offer a public health with total accessibility, optimizing resources in order to adequately serve all the population that requires it. In its social approach as a tool, marketing has been growing in recent years worldwide, because of its contribution to solve the different public health problems that are generated and tends to increase its incorporation in different fields of human endeavor<sup>1,2,3</sup>.

### **Ibero-American Network of Health Marketing**

The Ibero-American Health Marketing Network (Red Iberoamericana de Mercadotecnia en Salud, RIMS)<sup>4</sup>, is a non-governmental organization, public and international law, composed of professionals linked to Universities, Institutes of Higher Education, Governmental Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations, which promote,

disseminate or employ, health marketing strategies in Latin American countries and aims at academic and scientific cooperation, the exchange of academic staff and the development of programs, projects and services according to common interests, to contribute to scientific, technological and social development, health in the region. It was created in 2002 and maintains relations of exchange between member countries, has a website (<http://www.rims.org.mx/>) to facilitate the dissemination of information and organizes local and international events for the purpose to achieve the integration of all those who work in Latin America.

RIMS has focused on uniting efforts to make marketing a tool of value for health. It currently has representatives from 17 Latin American countries and has signed collaboration agreements with major universities in Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, Portugal and Peru. In Mexico, they join universities of several states, the Mexican Institute of Social Security, Federal Public Administration Agency. Agreements have also been signed with Fundación Salud "Dr. Augusto Turenne" of Uruguay and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of "Consumers International".

Editorial production and training of human resources have been RIMS 'priorities as a means of contributing to the social and economic development of Latin American countries and, at the same time, to the understanding of the usefulness of their use in health by managers and professionals. Currently, health marketing is included in the master's curriculum in several countries of the region; there are continuing education programs and trained personnel for teaching and advising in the conduct of studies and implementation of health marketing actions.

Areas of action include research in services, different professions, health promotion and disease prevention, rational use of medicines and environmental health, among others, which have been addressed by the members of the Network, so that this information, not only present

in scientific events, but also serves as a basis for health decision-making.

As part of the capacity building process, an interesting experience has been the annual scientific events held in the countries with the purpose of promoting a process of exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences among the participants of the health sciences, economic sciences administrative, social sciences and other disciplines, to strengthen the application of marketing in public health, mainly in the field of health promotion and services, contributing to health in all policies and achieve universal health. These events have been held in Cuba, Colombia (2), Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico (6), Panama (2) Peru and Portugal.

### Health Marketing in Latin America

The application of health marketing in Ibero-America, both in behavior change and in services, and the carrying out of research for the projection and evaluation of strategies, programs, projects and campaigns, has also allowed the theoretical enrichment and have the results to extract lessons, share the successful experiences with the contribution of professionals related to the subject from academia and services.

Among the main ones are<sup>5,6</sup> related to lifestyle, such as encouraging physical exercise and reduce sedentary lifestyle, promote healthy eating versus junk food, prevention of obesity, smoking, alcoholism, drug addiction; breastfeeding and rational consumption of medicines.

In prevention of noncommunicable diseases, there are experiences of programs and campaigns for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes, as well as in the transmittals for malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, dengue, zika and others transmitted by vectors. Also in personal and environmental hygiene (solid waste management, sustainability, risks and natural disasters) and prevention of accidents in the home, schools, work centers, recreation and transit places.

Sexual and reproductive health has been the target of programs and campaigns with a focus on social marketing, on pregnancy prevention and the need for institutional childbirth, mainly in vulnerable populations, such as indigenous and rural communities. There are also experiences regarding family planning with a gender perspective. STI / HIV / AIDS has a large number of projects in adherence to treatment, timely diagnosis, placement of protected sexual practices and condom use, empowerment of women in the relationship, elimination of stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV / AIDS and their care.

In the area of services, both public and private, there are projects to achieve the satisfaction of providers and users, as well as to position the institutional image and the different professions.

Study conducted in Latin American countries<sup>7,8</sup> as a result, that the knowledge of Marketing and its possibilities of application to health are insufficient; that the application of marketing to health services is favored in relation to its social approach; that there is interest in acquiring information on the subject and a positive attitude toward their employment is observed, which favors expanding the range of different types of academic training that respond to the needs of the personnel working in the field of public health. However, the scholars of theme<sup>8</sup> have also been able to verify the difficulty of the diffusion of academic modalities for their formation and even more the rejection in some cases and the indifference to a greater extent, to be included in the curricular network of proficient masters public health, including courses and diplomas<sup>9</sup>.

### Perspectives and Challenges

RIMS has as vision for 2020 to be a leader in health marketing in Latin America, with academic, professional and union recognition before Universities, Institutes of Higher Education, Government Institutions, Ministries and Public Institutions, Private Health and Non-Governmental Organizations of the different countries region of. In order to achieve this, it carried out a multi-center study in the countries of the region, which allowed the diagnosis of the existing situation and, on these bases, elaborate a Master Plan<sup>10</sup> with eight projects for its execution that contain goals, strategies, actions, which have been conceived from the strategic analysis and the critical success factors that are intended to be achieved. These are: teaching, academic events, research, publications, links in healthcare areas, visual communication, affiliation of partners and linking with other associations.

The main challenges it aims to achieve is that marketing, in its social approach:

- It will become a tool to shorten the gap between the formulation of public policies that contribute to health and reality.
- Be used as a strategy to guide the population toward well-being, rational consumption and sustainable development.
- Facilitate the identification of target audiences by segmenting the market, to project, on a scientific basis, health programs.
- Make it possible to focus on the consumer, patient or user.
- Provide a tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and universal health.

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The author has a degree in Psychology (1971), PhD in Economics by the University of Havana (1987). Titular Researcher and Professor and Consultant of the National School of Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Cuba. Visiting Professor of Latin American Universities. Member of the Honorary Chair in Health Systems and Services, the Society of Psychologists of Cuba and the Cuban Society of Public Health and Honorary Member of the Cuban Society of Hygiene and Epidemiology. Vice-President of the Permanent Court in Health Sciences of the Republic of Cuba. Secretary General of the Ibero-American Network of Health Marketing (RIMS).