

The Path to Psychiatric Research Dissemination: How Policy Decisions Are Made

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Salud Mental Journal (SMJ), the official publication of the Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz (INPRFM), has been Mexico's leading psychiatry and mental health journal for the past five decades. Since its inception in 1977, SMJ has shaped the public health research landscape in Mexico and parts of Latin America.

The journal has disseminated high-quality research exploring the nature of psychiatric (Medina-Mora et al., 2003) and substance use disorders (Berenzon-Gorn et al., 2024). It has impacted the academic discourse on these critical topics, providing valuable information for national mental health policymakers.

This issue of SMJ contains six articles on the clinimetric evaluation of various instruments. Developing valid, reliable and consistent instruments is the first step toward obtaining objective evaluations of psychiatric diagnoses and establishing a platform for mental health awareness, essential for psychiatric research dissemination.

Three of the articles evaluated children or adolescents, a particularly vulnerable population. The first one, by Unikel et al., 2025, validated the self-reported Binge Eating Disorder Scale in a sample of 378 school-aged children. The findings show that “eating without being hungry” is the main symptom reported, followed by “eating associated with a certain mood,” which could help identify children with potential binge eating behaviors. The second, by Gutiérrez-García et al., 2025, measured the psychometric properties of the Acquired Capability for Suicide Scale in Mexican adolescents. The results of their study of 459 adolescents in the community show that “pain tolerance” and “fearlessness toward death” are the factors that most accurately predict lifetime suicide events in this population. These findings demonstrate strong reliability, convergent validity, and predictive risk factors, as well as high sensitivity and specificity. The third paper determined the psychometric properties of the *Brief Life Skills Scale for Adolescents* (Fuentes et al., 2025) by administering it to 3787 students. The exploratory factor analysis model yielded a six-item structure: planning for the future, assertiveness, expression of emotions, resistance to peer pressure, decision making, and taking responsibility. These results show that the instrument has satisfactory psychometric properties, demonstrating its potential usefulness as a tool for assessing life skills in Mexican adolescents.

Disseminating these validated tools is the second step on the long road to establishing a national political path to psychiatric knowledge. In recent years, the SMJ has embarked on this endeavor on its own. Other psychiatric scientific journals published some years ago have since been discontinued. For example, publication of *Psiquis*, the official journal of the *Fray Bernardino Álvarez Hospital* in Mexico City ceased ten years ago. A similar organization, the *Asociación Mexicana de Psiquiatría Infantil*, stopped publishing its journal 20 years ago. A group of neurologists at the *Instituto Nacional de Neurología y Neurocirugía Manuel Velasco Suárez* in Mexico published *Archivos de Neurociencias* for 40 years with research on neuroscience, particularly neurological aspects, now in a new editorial area. The *Sociedad Mexicana de Neurología y Psiquiatría* published a journal called *Neurología, Neurocirugía y Psiquiatría*, discontinued in January 2024. Given this scenario, collaboration between SMJ and other psychiatric or mental health journals could help disseminate psychiatric knowledge.

The *Asociación Psiquiátrica Mexicana* (APM) published *Psiquiatría* for several decades. Fourteen years ago, it changed the name of the journal to *Revista APM Asociación Psiquiátrica Mexicana* (APMJ). Until 2023, APMJ not only published scientific papers (Busqueta et al., 2021) but also included social (Saucedo & Flores, 2020) and cultural content (Irigoyen, 2021). However, as from 2024, with the collaboration of SMJ, it was decided to transform APMJ into a scientific journal and benchmark publication in Mexico together with SMJ. The journals were established and originally guided by the commitment and vision of Dr. Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz, the ideological founder of both publications.

APMJ was transformed to align with SMJ's guidelines, implementing editorial strategies to evaluate original proposals, incorporating standardized evaluation formats, introducing manuscript delivery procedures to promote effective communication between editorial team members, peer reviewers and authors, and increasing international visibility in key fields. These actions were designed to achieve editorial collaboration whereby SMJ could share the editorial experience associated with its scientific success with APMJ. One of the main strategies was the participation of several SMJ co-editors as part of the editorial team in APMJ and their participation with editorials or original papers.

The first 2024 issue of APMJ included a systematic review of major health outcomes among medical students, which found suicide risk to be a prevalent risk factor (Guízar-Sánchez et al., 2024). The second included an editorial paper. Seventeen years ago, a health emergency was declared in *Villa de las Niñas* in *Chalco*, in the State of Mexico, where dozens of female adolescents were affected with functional neurological disorders. After many years, a detailed analysis of the social and psychiatric situation was discussed and published (de la Peña, Medina-Rodríguez et al., 2024). This issue also included a validation study with factor analysis based on the Morisky Medication Adherence Scale of participants diagnosed with major depressive disorder (Medina & Lugo, 2024). The third issue contained a systematic review with meta-aggregation. The findings suggest that video game exposure could be a moderating factor promoting healthy executive function development in both children and adolescents, while playing violent video games and being male could be predictors of depressive disorders (Medina et al., 2024). The final participation of SMJ's co-editors involved an original paper on the multi-informant procedure to diagnose limited prosocial emotions in a clinical adolescent population (de la Peña, Taboada-Liceaga et al., 2024).

A leading INPRFM researcher decided to publish a thought-provoking epidemiological paper acknowledging the existence of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, linking it to certain sociodemographic characteristics (Benjet et al., 2024).

APM implemented a research and publication program for residents to publish their theses, called "Publica tu Tesis" (Publish your Thesis). An evaluation of child anxiety and depression at two foster care homes in Mexico City was the first research linked to this key initiative to be published (Guerrero-Medrano et al., 2024).

The revamped APMJ obtained its electronic International Standard Serial Number (eISSN 3061-7979) in February 2025. APMJ has been indexed in some of the top scientific databases, such as Google Scholar, the Latin American Network of Academic Journals in Social Sciences and Humanities (LatinRev), and the Scientific Literature Database (Scilit). Modifications to the journal included reducing the annual number of issues from four to three, reflecting its commitment to transitioning from a cultural and social magazine into a publication for the dissemination of psychiatric research.

In conclusion, SMJ scientific papers have made a key contribution to mental health policy decisions regarding psychiatric and substance use disorders. In the past, SMJ experienced certain difficulties in its collaborative editorial work with other journals. However, SMJ and APMJ will continue to share and improve their work with original papers, reviewing materials to enhance the quality of their publications and ensure the continuity and productivity of their collaboration.

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