

The date of the IV National Internal Medicine congress is approaching.

Following identical events in Coimbra, Lisbon and Oporto (Praia da Granja), Coimbra will once again host this important meeting, to be held on 30th and 31st March and 1st June of next year.

Looking back, I recall that in the nineteen seventies, Internal Medicine in Portugal was personified by the much referred to Escola dos Hospitais Cívicos de Lisboa, accompanied by some big names who, whether alone or as part of small groups, were prominent in Oporto and Coimbra. Outside these three centers - and forgive me for any injustice - Internal Medicine in Portugal had little expression.

In the second half of that decade, we saw many colleagues in the area of medicine deciding to take up subspecializations, which naturally enriched not only their specific training, but also through the complementary exams that came to use and provide, the diagnostic scenario in Internal Medicine.

Specialized internships gradually became more regular, preparing interns so that, having obtained a good qualification in their area of specialization, they came to occupy a place on the hospital staffs. It then naturally occurred that in the various services with training capacity, dozens of specialists in Internal Medicine were trained, and today these occupy practically all the places available in our hospitals.

The creation of job vacancies for Internal Medicine, and their occupation in the hospitals outside the major centers, was an important point of the cycle that we are now seeing.

With a few notable exceptions, the country is now well equipped in our area of specialization, both in terms of quantity and quality. Unequivocal and forceful proof of this is the continually increasing scientific standard of our congresses. And the next one, I firmly believe, will follow this trend.

The Organizing Committee, to which I belong, is making every effort to make it a scientific event that involves, where possible, all the interns of Internal Medicine and Portuguese internists.

We hope to attract colleagues from the highest number of hospitals, both within and outside the major centers, to participate in the activities of the event. We make a point of ensuring that each one



feels represented in this or that activity. We will give preference to national representation, however, the presence of some carefully chosen foreign colleagues is also expected.

I suggest that everybody begins to plan their participation, whether by making space in their schedules, or by preparing works to present.

The meeting, once again, of hundreds of internists and interns of Internal Medicine, will become a reality.

The high level of participation, which I am certain we will see, together with a good scientific level, which I predict for this IV Congress, will certainly be gratifying for all of us, as well as sending out a clear signal of the vitality of Portuguese Internal Medicine.

See you in Coimbra, next May. ■

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ávila Costa'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ávila Costa