

Pan American Health Organization

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEDICAL RESEARCH

Eighth Meeting

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Item 10.1 of the Agenda

REGIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

Report of the Scientific Advisory Committee

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PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Regional Office of the  
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SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE  
PAHO REGIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE\*

Following the recommendation of the PAHO Advisory Committee on Medical Research in 1965 to establish a regional library of medicine, to be located at the Escola Paulista de Medicina, in São Paulo, Brazil, two years were devoted to assessing available resources, searching for funds, and identifying future staff needs.

Funding actually began in 1967 with support from the Brazilian Ministries of Health and of Education and Culture, the Commonwealth Fund, and the U.S. National Library of Medicine, with the Escola Paulista de Medicina providing the basic staff and physical facilities.

The Scientific Advisory Committee on the PAHO Regional Library of Medicine held its first meeting in September 1968 at São Paulo. The full report of this meeting is presented at this time. A second meeting has now been scheduled for September 1969.

A number of initiatives have been taken since the first meeting. During 1968 one U.S. librarian officially joined the RLM staff after a period of consultantship, and two consultant directors were sent to São Paulo on brief successive tours to assist in the Library's organization.

The National Library of Medicine, under a contract with PAHO and through credits provided to the U. S. Book Exchange, has made a significant contribution to strengthening the Regional Library's collection. In addition, the NLM is committed to furnish the Regional Library with appropriate technical backstopping and with training for specialized purposes.

Since at the time of the first Scientific Advisory Committee meeting the Regional Library had no director, the Committee reviewed many operating problems and made recommendations concerning the physical plant, equipment, the library collection, the nature and level of present and potential staff, training, and the provision of services. Highest priority was given to the

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recommendation that a director be appointed as soon as possible, since strong and competent leadership was considered absolutely essential for the success of the program. Thus, the appointment of the new Director in January 1969 came as most welcome news.

A number of the policy and program issues raised at that meeting are now under examination by the Director. These questions, listed here, will undoubtedly form the basis for discussion at the next meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee:

1. The Regional Library as a PAHO organizational entity, in terms of administration and institutional support.
2. The relationship of the Regional Library to the Escola Paulista de Medicina and to the Government of Brazil.
3. The continuing need for high-level competent personnel, to be drawn from the South American countries.
4. The provision of effective services, first within Brazil, and later throughout the rest of South America.
5. Attainment of the Regional Library's ultimate objective to serve as an effective communication instrument for improving medical research, education and practice.

Given the complexity of the problems associated with this new undertaking, there is no doubt that a good start has been made to fulfill the objectives of the program.