

*directing council*

*regional committee*



PAN AMERICAN  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

XXXV Meeting



WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

XLIII Meeting

Washington, D.C.  
September 1991

Provisional Agenda Item 2.6

CD35/3 (Eng.)  
10 September 1991  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

NINTH JACQUES PARISOT FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP AWARD

The award, instituted to pay homage to the memory of the eminent Professor Jacques Parisot, consists of a medal and a fellowship of US\$5,000 for development of a research project of one year's duration in the area of social medicine or public health.

This award is granted every two years by the Jacques Parisot Foundation, whose chairman is the Director-General of the World Health Organization. In February 1992, the selected fellow should initiate his or her research, the results of which should be presented in May 1993, during the Forty-sixth World Health Assembly, at which the corresponding medal will be presented to him or her.

Because of a selection process that rotates among the various regions of WHO, the next award will be granted to an investigator of the Region of the Americas. The selection process consists of the following stages:

- Selection of a subject by the Regional Director;
- Invitation to the Member States to propose candidates;
- Review of the candidates and their respective proposals by the Regional Advisory Committee on Health Research (ACHR);
- Analysis of the report of the ACHR by the Regional Committee for selection of up to three proposals; and, finally,
- Awarding of the fellowship by the Executive Board of the Parisot Foundation on the basis of the recommendations of the Regional Committee.

At the beginning of 1990, the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau selected the subject "Women, Health, and Development" and invited the Member Countries, through the respective Ministries of Health, to send their proposals.

The Research Coordination Unit of PAHO (DRC) selected two proposals on the subject and submitted them to the ACHR during its XXVIII Meeting held in August 1991.

The present document reports to the Directing Council the result of the discussions of the matter by the ACHR.

The two projects submitted to the ACHR were:

- a) "Intrafamily Violence and the Situation of Women in Chile," under the direction of the psychologist Maria Soledad Larraín, of the National Women's Service (SENAMI), Chile; and
- b) "Questions Associated with Female Sterilization in Brazil," under the direction of Dr. Elza Berquó of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), São Paulo, Brazil.

The first project treats the problem of domestic violence against women. It has as its objective the study of the prevalence and characteristics of domestic violence, its perception, and the response of the health system. In a survey in Chile, it was found that 80% of 222 women interviewed stated that they had suffered acts of domestic violence, 52% committed by their partners and 32% by immediate family members. In Brazil in 1980, 772 women were assassinated by their husbands. The author proposes to study the prevalence and characteristics of this important problem, interviewing women in relationships, over 25 years of age, selected by multiphase stratified sampling in the metropolitan area of Santiago. The Committee considered the project of great relevance and pertinence, mentioning, however, some methodological problems, such as a definition of violence that was not perfectly clear, difficulties in the reliability of this type of information collected through questionnaires, and the very short time of execution for the breadth of the project.

The project on female sterilization has as its objective the identification of the symbolic meaning attributed to female sterilization and the reasons for selection of this irreversible contraceptive method. Previous surveys indicate that in Brazil, among women in relationships who are between 15 and 54 years, 44.4% are sterilized, a percentage that can reach 71.3% in the State of Goiás and 61.4% in Pernambuco. The methodology to be utilized is of a qualitative nature, with focal groups to be composed of sterilized and unsterilized women between 15 and 54 years of age. The Committee recognized the importance of the problem and considered the methodology adequate for a deeper analysis of its determinants. It stressed the difficulty in the handling and analysis of the data collected by this methodology.

The ACHR recognized that both projects treat extremely relevant subjects; they possess adequate methodological designs; and the responsible investigators and their respective equipment provide conditions for their completion.

As both projects have a budget of around US\$20,000, that is to say, over the US\$5,000 of the fellowship, the Committee recommends that the PAHO Grants Program provide the additional funds necessary for carrying out the selected project.

In conclusion, the ACHR considers that both projects are deserving of the Jacques Parisot award. In addition, it also considers that, because of the particular relevance of the subject, the quality of the proposal presented, and the background of the principal investigator, the project on female sterilization in Brazil, proposed by Dr. Elza Berquó, should be selected as the principal candidate for the award.