



Four decades of science from Vueltabajo: history, legacy and horizon of the Journal of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río

Ariel Efrain Delgado Rodríguez¹ 

¹University of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río. Pinar del Río, Cuba.

Citación: Delgado Rodríguez AE. Cuatro décadas de ciencia desde Vueltabajo: historia, legado y horizonte de la Revista de Ciencias Médicas de Pinar del Río. Rev Ciencias Médicas [Internet]. 2026 [citado: fecha de acceso]; 30(2026): e7210. Disponible en: <http://revcmpinar.sld.cu/index.php/publicaciones/article/view/7210>

Received: January 14, 2026
Accepted: January 16, 2026
Published: January 17, 2026

Dear readers:

In 2026, the Journal of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río reaches a milestone that deserves to be recognized with the solemnity that milestones merit: forty years since its first printed pages circulated among health professionals of Vueltabajo, and almost three decades since it made the leap into the digital world to become the open-access electronic publication we know today. This double anniversary—that of the seed and of the tree that grew—invites an honest retrospective look and an ambitious projection for the future, from the perspective of those of us who today have the privilege and responsibility of sustaining this tool of Pinar del Río's scientific knowledge. The journal was born in 1986 as a printed publication (Fig. 1), the child of an era when Cuban medical science was experiencing a moment of unprecedented expansion.



Fig. 1 First published issue of the journal.

The Revolution had made health an inalienable right, and the University of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río was training generations of specialists who produced knowledge but lacked a formal space to share it with the national and international scientific community. This need—to socialize the knowledge generated from Pinar del Río—was the driving force behind its creation, and it remains, four decades later, its deepest reason for being.

The year 1992 marked a turning point not only for this journal, but for all Cuban medical information. On December 18 of that year, within the National Center for Medical Sciences Information (CNICM), Infomed emerged: Cuba's first telematic health information network, conceived as a creative and sovereign response to the crisis of the Special Period, when traditional information channels were collapsing.⁽¹⁾ Infomed was born under the vision of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, who placed science, information, and technology at the service of Cubans' health as a strategic imperative of the State, at a time when the U.S. blockade sought to isolate Cuba even from global knowledge networks.⁽²⁾ That political decision not to surrender to informational isolation, to build its own network—open, decentralized, and with a Latin American vocation—transformed forever the ecosystem of medical scientific publication in Cuba.

For the Journal of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río, Infomed was the vehicle for its second life. In 1997, the publication left paper behind and became an electronic journal, hosted on the institutional domain of the National Health System, with free and open access for any professional in the world. It was not merely a technical change: it was the materialization of a philosophical principle that holds that knowledge generated with public resources should be a public good. Since then, and for twenty-nine consecutive volumes, without interruptions, without excuses, despite energy contingencies, economic crises, and a global pandemic, the journal has fulfilled its mission.

Behind each published issue has been the Provincial Center for Medical Sciences Information (CPICM), an institution founded on May 2, 1971, as part of the CNICM-Infomed strategy for developing the National Information System in Health Sciences.⁽³⁾ The CPICM is not merely the administrative headquarters of this journal: it is the central nervous system of health knowledge management in the province. Through its four areas of action—the provincial Infomed node that guarantees connectivity for universities, hospitals, and health units; the network of twenty-six medical libraries distributed across the eleven municipalities of the province; the editorial group that brings this journal and the Revista Universidad Médica Pinareña to life; and the management of institutional websites—the CPICM articulates, integrates, and enhances all scientific-informational activity of Vueltabajo's health sector.

An anniversary like this imposes the moral duty of recognition. This journal did not reach its forty years by inertia: it arrived sustained by the silent, systematic, and passionate work of those who preceded it. The directors and editors who over these decades shaped each issue, who faced resource limitations with creativity, who raised editorial standards when it would have been more comfortable to leave

them where they were, who trained referees and reviewers, who answered emails in the early hours and corrected bibliographic references on Sundays—all of them are co-authors of the instrument we inherit today. Very particularly, Dr. Joaquín Hilario Pérez Labrador, who directed the journal during decisive years, consolidated the editorial platform and sowed a culture of rigor that defines the character of this publication to this day. To all of them, the explicit and sincere recognition of those of us who continue their work.

But anniversaries are not only looks backward. They are also calls forward. Today, a new generation of editors, reviewers, referees, and authors sustains and projects this journal. They are specialist physicians, teachers, young researchers who have learned that publishing is not a bureaucratic formality but an act of scientific responsibility; that peer review is not an obstacle but a guarantee of quality; that writing for the international medical community from Pinar del Río is possible and necessary. This generation inherited a journal indexed in SciELO Cuba, CINAHL, Latindex Catalog v2.0, ERIHPlus, DOAJ, and multiple international repositories. And it has the challenge—and the conditions—to take it further.

The most urgent and most transformative horizon we have ahead today is the indexing of the Journal of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río in MEDLINE/PubMed, the most consulted biomedical database on the planet, managed by the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Achieving that objective would mean that every article published by a physician, specialist, or teacher from our province would be immediately retrievable by millions of professionals in any corner of the world. It would be the international consecration of decades of editorial effort. The CPICM, in its role as strategic coordinator, has drawn up a concrete roadmap for this objective, shared with the Rector's Office of the University of Medical Sciences, which includes strengthening methodological rigor in published articles, universalizing high-quality English titles and abstracts, consolidating transparent editorial policies, and normalizing all metadata according to the standards required by the NLM.⁽⁴⁾

This editorial is, before anything else, a call. A call to the health professionals of Pinar del Río to recognize in this journal what it is: the most legitimate and most authentic space they have to share the results of their scientific work with the world. A call to young residents, recently graduated specialists, and researchers in training to understand that publishing is part of their professional development, not an accessory to it. And a call to the entire academic community of the University of Medical Sciences to assume scientific visibility as a collective responsibility, because every well-written, well-designed, and well-published article is a contribution to the international reputation of our institution and to the health of populations that can benefit from our knowledge.

The Journal of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río turns forty. It was born from paper, grew on the web, survived crises, and remains here, in volume thirty of its electronic edition, faithful to the purpose with which it was founded: to put Vueltaabajo's science at the service of health. The CPICM cares for it, projects it, and defends it as the strategic resource that it is. And those of us who direct it today do so by honoring those who came before, committed to those who work today, and thinking of those who will publish tomorrow.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

1. Portal de la Red de Salud de Cuba. Acerca de Infomed [Internet]. La Habana: CNICM-Infomed; 2023 [citado 14/03/2026]. Disponible en: <https://www.sld.cu/acerca-de/>
2. CNICM-Infomed. Fidel Castro, líder consagrado a la salud para todos [Internet]. La Habana: Infomed; 2016 [citado 14/03/2026]. Disponible en: <http://www.sld.cu/noticia/2016/11/28/fidel-castro-lider-consagrado-la-salud-para-todos>
3. CNICM-Infomed. Arriba a su 48 aniversario el Centro Provincial de Información de Ciencias Médicas de Pinar del Río [Internet]. La Habana: Campus Virtual de Salud Pública; 2019 [citado 14/03/2026]. Disponible en: <https://campus.paho.org/cuba/arriba-su-48-aniversario-el-centro-provincial-de-informacion-de-ciencias-medicas-de-pinar-del-rio>
4. National Library of Medicine. MEDLINE Journal Selection [Internet]. Bethesda: NLM; 2024 [citado 14/03/2026]. Disponible en: https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medline/medline_journal_selection.html