

## Historical view of the professional development of emergency medical responders from ambulance attendants to paramedics in Spain (3): the scientific leadership role of the Spanish Society of Emergency Medicine (SEMES)

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Article 5 of the Statutes (5) of the Spanish Society of Accident and Emergency Medicine (SEMES), created over 20 years, says literally that it "will promote the creation and development of medical, nursing and emergency medicine technicians". Accordingly, 10 years ago, SEMES developed the Certificate of Health Emergency Technician (CTES), which represented a milestone in comprehensive training in emergency medicine and in the academic certification of professionals working in this sector. CTES was created as the accreditation for a profession still not officially recognized in Spain at the time. The goal was to certify the knowledge and activities, ie. skills necessary for the activity and training of TES professionals while awaiting official recognition as a profession. After such recognition, approval and establishment of the title "Técnico en Emergencias Sanitarias" (TES)<sup>1,2</sup>, this certificate is currently suspended by the SEMES Board of Directors, pending the decision on its usefulness in the new situation. In 2010, SEMES ran a basic provider course on ITLS (International Trauma Life Support) for staff previously designated medical transport technicians (TTS) to certify their training in two of the four units of competency (UC). And SEMES is currently working on 30-hour training modules for accreditation of other UC, taught directly or through a MEDITEX SEMES platform accessible through the SEMES website.

Similarly, it also corresponds to the Scientific Secretariat of SEMES to evaluate and authorize the scientific publications that meet the require-

ments as reference material for training courses. These requirements should also be validated and reciprocally endorsed by regional groups of members. SEMES will promote the implementation of the training cycle necessary to obtain the title "Técnico de Grado Medio de TES" throughout the country and will work with local authorities in the fields of education, employment and health to extend such training to Spanish institutes. In addition, the training will be offered directly and online, so that working professionals can also obtain the new title. SEMES will also facilitate partial registration, and actively participate in the training of new advisers and examiners necessary for the evaluation procedure and accreditation (PEAC), establish the appropriate training programs, and mediate with the institutions involved. All this will ensure that these important changes are progressively introduced in the professional sector.

The European Commission has included continuous or life-long learning in the European employment strategy, so that all learning activities aim to continuously improve professional qualifications, and within them are these units of competency. In this context, academic recognition of the title Health Emergency Technician is conceived by SEMES as a demanding process, to provide hierarchy and transparency in access to employment in the public administration or private companies, leading to optimal training of new graduates and maximum professional development. In this regard, the Society supports the measures that make it easier for professionals, as so-

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on as possible, to obtain the two main qualifications for the title of TES: that of TTS and that of "Attending multiple victims and disasters" (AMVC in Spanish).

Thus SEMES is, more than ever, committed to the professional development of TES as a fundamental part of a team of emergency professionals or responsible for a basic life support unit operating under the aegis of an emergency coordination center.

In addition, given the current level of decentralization, National SEMES must act as the natural intermediary with the Central Administration, and Autonomous Community SEMES groups must fulfill the same role with their respective regional authorities. The purpose is to guarantee harmonious cohesion and professional development of TES throughout the country, for the good of all the actors involved, as envisaged in the Law 16/2003 of May 28 on Cohesion and Quality of the NHS. This without prejudice to the rights of each autonomous community to complete the training curriculum of their own TES, and to convolve free access tests for the title and PEAC. At present, SEMES supports maximum coordination between autonomous communities on the timing of convocatories to avoid unnecessary movements of professionals from their own to different communities.

Beyond strictly scientific questions, it is clear that these developments and regulatory changes may cause uncertainty among our members; SEMES assumes the obligation to improve both the academic and working conditions of its members,

and offers to intercede or even to take the initiative where necessary in order to seek agreements between the different professional interests involved. Our members are more aware than most of the professional frustration of not having academic recognition for the uniqueness and worth of our daily work. But in modern academia, degrees and titles are only useful as recognition of the possession of competencies, i.e. knowledge (theoretical knowledge), skills (practical know how) and attitudes in order to successfully take on our professional activities or tasks. We all know it is not the same to be attended by someone who is entitled to do so as to be attended by someone who is competent. In addition to certification we need competence conceived of as the completion of initial training that will be renewed and re-evaluated throughout one's working life. Competence covers the contents from initial to specialized training, and this is an on-going process. However, we cannot ignore the importance of titles in the workplace as a reflection of qualification to perform a professional activity, and the uncertainty that arises in a sector with new, emerging qualifications should be viewed as an opportunity to achieve maximum professional development.

## References

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