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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Tracking primates
against yellow fever

Alexandra Ozorio de Almeida | EDITOR IN CHIEF

From December 2016 to August 2017, nearly 800 people contracted yellow fever in Brazil, of whom 262 died, according to the World Health Organization. In December 2017, deaths in the metropolitan region of São Paulo showed that the outbreak remained active and had reached urban areas. The Brazilian government adopted preventive vaccination campaigns targeted at areas identified by data from another type of victim: primates living in the wild, who are also susceptible to the disease.

Nearly twenty years ago, the Brazilian Ministry of Health adopted the strategy of monitoring primate deaths to identify new areas of transmission. The cover report (*page 4*) presents a case study of the state of São Paulo where an epidemiological model describes the direction, speed and probable paths taken by the virus causing yellow fever. These maps support the policy of vaccinating all residents within 30 kilometers of animal corpses, facilitating a more rational use of resources.

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The increase in access to higher education is the objective of affirmative actions adopted by state-level and federal institutions in Brazil. Increasing student diversity without lowering admission standards is a complex challenge. One consequence of these policies is that direct admittance exams are no longer the only way to access higher education. The distribution of exam bonus points for public education students, quotas for people with African or Indian heritage and the use of grades obtained from government exams assessing the quality of high school education are some of the actions implemented in Brazil since the 2000s (*page 20*).

The mathematician, statistician and demographer Elza Berquó dedicated her life to the study of changes in Brazilian reproductive behavior. In over 70 years of work, Berquó was central to the implementation of formal, mainstream teaching of demography in Brazil. She founded and helped create schools, centers and institutions, such as Cebrap (Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning) and Nepo, which is now named after her – the Elza Berquó Center for Population Study at the University of Campinas (Unicamp). In a rare interview, the researcher discussed her recent work interests related to adolescent suicide, which is on the rise worldwide, and her past activities (*page 70*). Forced to retire from the School of Public Health in 1968 during the military dictatorship, her story is intertwined with the history of Brazil.

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Another interesting interview reproduced in this international edition, which includes highlights from editions published in Portuguese from September 2017 to February 2018, is with entomologist José Roberto Postalí Parra. A leader in the field of biological controls for combatting crop pests, the researcher laments being forced to retire precisely when biological controls are gaining ground in Brazilian agriculture. Four decades of research on the biology of natural enemies of pests, such as sugarcane borers and greening of orange groves, as well as their interaction with the environment, have proven useful to farmers. The researcher acknowledges that biological control is not a universal solution, but an increase in the use of this strategy facilitates a substantial reduction in pesticide use in agriculture (*page 14*).