

2011 Report of the activities of Latin-American Regional Commission of ILAE

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Introduction:

The Latin American Commission has as objective to improve the diagnosis and treatment of the epilepsies in Latin-American, in the frame our ILAE politics and his strategic plan.

Aims

1. To provide and promote epilepsy education and research with excellence, quality, efficient and humanistic approach for medical and non-medical professionals in Latin America
2. To coordinate academic activities among the ILAE Latin America Region chapters

The commission is composed by 11 physicians, but also all Latin-American ILAE chapters are involved.

The main activities on 2011 were:

1) STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION ON EPILEPSY

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) approved, during the last 51st Directing Council and 63rd Session of the Regional Committee (September 2011, Washington, USA), the Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsies for the Americas and their implementation under the particular conditions of each country to provide an appropriate response to current and future needs.

It is the main issue for us during 2011 and our duty for the next 5 years for develop epilepsy programs in all regional countries, and improve the diagnostic, treatment and quality of life in all people with epilepsy.

The Strategic plan promote partnerships with the International League against Epilepsy (ILAE) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE), as well as international agencies, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and other regional actors in support of the broad multispectral response needed for the execution of this strategy and plan of action.

The main persons to rich this plan were Dr. Jorge Rodriguez (PAHO), Dr. Carlos Acevedo (IBE) and Dr. Marco Medina (ILAE). We have a meeting in October 2011 in Honduras to prepare the strategies, in this activity participated the maxima authorities from WHO, ILAE and IBE.

The Strategic Plan urge the Member States to:

- a) make epilepsy a priority in national health policy by executing specific national programs suited to the conditions of each country to sustain achievements and make progress toward meeting new goals, especially in relation to reducing the existing treatment gaps;
- b) strengthen legal frameworks as appropriate in order to protect the human rights of people with epilepsy and ensure effective enforcement of the laws;
- c) promote universal equitable access to medical care for all people with epilepsy by strengthening health services in systems based on primary health care and integrated service networks;
- d) ensure the availability of the four antiepileptic drugs considered essential for treating people with epilepsy, especially at the primary care level;
- e) strengthen neurology services as support for case detection and management at the primary care level, ensuring adequate distribution of the necessary auxiliary diagnostic media;
- f) support effective participation by the community and associations of users and family members in activities designed to secure better care for people with epilepsy;
- g) consider strengthening human resources as key to improving national epilepsy programs, through systematic training geared especially to the personnel in primary health care;
- h) promote intersectoral and educational initiatives directed to the population to combat the stigma and discrimination suffered by people with epilepsy;
- i) close the information gap in the field on epilepsy by improving the production, analysis, and use of information, including research;
- j) strengthen partnerships between the health sector, other sectors, and nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and key social actors.

2) V Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy (LASSE) - Escuela de Verano de Epilepsia. February 2010, Sao Paulo, Brazil:

LASSE is organized by Prof. Esper Abrao Cavalheiro with the support of many Brazilian colleagues (Drs. Elza Marcia Yacubian, Americo Sakamoto, Fernando Cendes, etc). LASSE V received more than 50 young professionals of whole Latin-America for more than week a full- 10 days course, who learnt through conferences and working in scientific projects. It is in part supported by ILAE (20%); the rest of the resources came from the Brazilian Government and research agencies.

Also the successful of LASSE depend of the generosity of many faculties (epileptologists) in great relationship with our ILAE.

The previous LASSE were:

- 1) The First Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy: "Epilepsy: translating basic knowledge into clinical applications", was held from 4 – 14, February 2007.
- 2) The Second Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy: "Increasing knowledge and decreasing treatment gap", was held from 7 – 17, February 2008.
- 3) The Third Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy: "Epileptogenesis in the developing brain: basis for treatment and prevention", 4 – 14, February 2009.
- 4) The Four Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy: "Epilepsy and Time", was held from 1st – 10th, February 2010.

The LASSE V was performed during 20 Feb. 2011 – 01 March 2011, organized at the Santa Monica Hotel and Convention Center in Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil. The main topic was "EPILEPSY, BEHAVIOR AND COGNITION"

A special event, during the LASSE V, was a special award to Prof. Carlos Medina-Malo a great neuro-pediatric from Colombia for his work devoted to the development of epilepsy treatment in Colombia and Latin-America.

PROGRAM (LASSE V)

20 Feb

- 08:30 – 09:00 - Welcome address
- 09:00 – 10:00 - The new ILAE proposal for classification of seizures and syndromes – Peter Wolf (DK)
- 10:00 – 11:00 - Towards a new classification of focal cortical dysplasia – Roberto Spreafico (Italy)
- 11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break
- 11:30 – 12:30 - Neonatal seizures - Regina M. F. Fernandes (Brazil)
- 12:30 – 14:00 – Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:00 - Seizures during infancy – Vera Cristina Terra (Brazil)
- 15:00 – 16:00 - Seizures during adolescence – Katia Lin (Brazil)
- 16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break
- 16:30 – 17:30 - Seizures in the adulthood – Luis Otávio Caboclo (Brazil)
- 17:30 – 18:30 - Seizures in the elderly – Veriano Alexandre Junior (Brazil)
- 18:30 – 20:00 – Dinner
- 20:30 – 21:30 - Mind in Antiquity – F. Mario Fales (Italy)

21 Feb

09:00 – 10:00 - The cortical lobes: shall we enter them? – Marina Bentivoglio (Italy)
10:00 – 11:00 - Right brain, left brain - Giuseppe Bertini (Italy)
11:00 – 11:30 - Coffee break
11:30 -12:30 - Role of the hippocampus in memory processing – Martin Cammarota (Brazil)
12:30 – 14:30 - Lunch
14:30 – 15:30 - Memory processes and mechanisms in the mammalian brain - Richard Morris (UK)
15:30 – 16:00 – Coffee break
16:00 – 17:00 - Effects of retrieval on memory retention - Martin Cammarota (Brazil)
17:00 – 18:00 – Formation of working groups and distribution of research topics among students
18:30 – 20:00 - Dinner
20:30 – Evening event

22 Feb

09:00 – 10:00 - The neurobiology of memory: synaptic tagging and schemas -Richard Morris (UK)
10:00 – 11:00 - System consolidation and memory persistence - Martin Cammarota (Brazil)
11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30 - Brain and gender - Marina Bentivoglio (Italy)
12:30 – 14:00 – Lunch
14:00 – 15:00 - Neuroanatomical organization of episodic memory - Monica Munoz-Lopez (Spain)
15:00 – 16:00 - From sensation to perception: what have we learned from the study of vision – Giuseppe Bertini (Italy)
16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break
16:30 – 17:30 - Brain systems for spatial cognition - Roberto Caminiti (Italy)
17:30 – 18:30 - Social Cognition: definition and concepts - Alexandra Battaglia-Mayer (Italy)
19:00 – 21:00 – Dinner

23 Feb

09:00 – 10:00 - Neural basis of social cognition - Alexandra Battaglia-Mayer (Italy)
10:00 – 11:00 - Pathology of spatial cognition - Roberto Caminiti (Italy)
11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30 - Incidence of amnesia after neonatal hypoxia/ischaemia - Monica Munoz-Lopez (Spain)
12:30 – 14:00 – Lunch
14:00 – 15:00 - Impact of the first seizure in the posterior psychological development – Jaime Carrizosa (Colombia)
15:00 – 16:00 - Do we have reliable neurophysiologic tool to measure and understand human cognition? Alicia Bogacz (Uruguay)
16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break
16:30 – 17:30 – Cognitive changes in MTLE – Carlos Guerreiro (Brazil)
19:00 – 21:00 – Dinner

24 Feb

09:00 – 10:00 - Psychiatric aspects of epilepsy: why neurologists should be concerned with that? Andres Kanner (USA)
10:00 – 11:00 - Cognitive deficits in frontal lobe epilepsy - Silvia Kochen (Argentina)
10:00 – 10:30 – Coffee break
10:30 – 11:30 - Psychiatric disorders and epilepsy: Are there common pathogenic substrates? Andres Kanner (USA)
11:30 – 12:30 - Fast oscillations, memory and epileptiform discharges - Massimo Avoli (Canada, Italy)
12:30 – 14:00 – Lunch
14:00 – 15:00 - Cognitive aspects of benign focal epilepsies of childhood - Roberto Caraballo (Argentina)
15:00 – 16:00 - Neural circuits of photosensitivity - Patricia Braga (Uruguay)
16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00 - Dedicated to team work
19:00 – 21:00 - Dinner

25 Feb

09:00 – 10:00 – AEDs and psychiatric comorbidities in epilepsy - Andres Kanner (USA)
10:00 – 11:00 - Behavioral and psychological changes in JME – Bettina Schmitz (Germany)
10:00 – 10:30 – Coffee break
10:30 – 11:30 - Penelope Syndrome: ESES, Encephalopathy with Status Epilepticus during sleep – Carlo Alberto Tassinari (Italy)
11:30 – 12:30 – MRI abnormalities associated with depression in MTLE - Fernando Cendes (Brazil)
12:30 – 14:00 – Lunch
14:00 – 15:00 - Cognitive consequences of neonatal seizures – Magda Lahorgue Nunes (Brazil)
15:00 – 16:00 - The patients' perception about epilepsy and what they do about it - Peter Wolf (Denmark)
16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break
16:30 – 17:30 – Cognitive decline in pediatric epilepsies – Solomon Moshe (USA)
18:30 – 20:00 – Dinner
20:30 – 21:30 – ALADE lecture - Epilepsy: the importance of learning to classify for learning to treat – Carlos Medina-Malo (Colombia)

26 Feb

08:30 – 09:30 – Progressive cognitive deficits in MTLE – Samuel Wiebe (Canada)
09:30 – 10:30 - Predictors of postoperative memory and cognitive impairment in MTLE - Fernando Cendes (Brazil)
10:30 – 11:00 – Coffee break
11:00 – 12:00 - Genetic testing in the epilepsies--report of the ILAE Genetics Commission – What is the relevance for diagnosis of catastrophic epilepsies? – Iscia Lopes Cendes (Brazil)
12:00 – 13:00 – Memory and language in refractory epilepsy – Mirna W. Portuguez (Brazil)
13:00 – 15:00 – Lunch
15:00 – 19:00 – Dedicated to team work

27 Feb

09:00 – 10:00 - Neuropsychological effects of seizures - Gus Baker (England)
10:00 – 11:00 - Mesial temporal lobe epilepsy: clinical or surgical treatment? - Samuel Wiebe (Canada)
11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30 - Neuropsychological consequences of intrauterine exposure to antiepileptic drugs - Gus Baker (England)
12:30 – 14:00 - Lunch
14:00 - 15:00 - Treatment of newly diagnosed epilepsy – Emilio Perucca (Italy)
15:00 – 16:00 - Neuropsychological consequences of seizures in Childhood Absence Epilepsies – Marco Tulio Medina (Honduras)
16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee break
16:30 – 17:30 - Treatment of refractory epilepsy - Jacqueline French (USA)

28 Feb

08:30 – 09:30 - Impact of surgery for treatment of epilepsy on cognition - Manuel Campos (Chile)
09:30 – 10:30 - Cognitive deficits resulting from the use of antiepileptic drugs – Jacqueline French (USA)
10:30 – 11:00 - Coffee break
11:00 – 12:00 - New technologies for pediatric epilepsy surgery: What is its impact on cognition? - Helio Rubens Machado (Brazil)
12:00 – 13:00 - The discovery of brain mechanisms responsible for face recognition - Charles Gross (USA)
13:00 – 15:00 – Lunch
15:00 – 19:00 – Dedicated to team work
19:00 – 21:00 – Dinner

1st March

9:00 – 18:00 - Presentation and discussion of research projects prepared by the students

3) **Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE)**

ALADE Mission: To provide and promote epilepsy education and research with excellence, quality, efficient and humanistic approach for medical and non-medical professionals in Latin America.

ALADE Vision: To promote and provide epilepsy education and research, aiming to improve the health care of people with epilepsy in the region.

Goal: The goal of ALAE is to promote epilepsy education and research in the Latin American region in order to improve health care of people with epilepsy.

ALADE depends of our Commission and is its academic arm. The new members were designed at February 2011: Elza M. Yacubian (President, Brazil), Jaime Carrizosa (Secretary, Colombia) and Roberto Caravallo (Delegate, Argentina). During the next months we will include new members.

We would like to thank to all colleagues, who worked and served to ALADE from 2008 to February 2011: Elza M. Yacubian (Brazil), Patricia Campos (Perú), Silvia Kochen (Argentina), Francisco Rubio Donnadieu (México), Alejandro Scaramelli (Uruguay), Esper Cavalheiro (Secretary, Brazil) and Marco T. Medina (President, Honduras).

ALADE performed courses at the LACE 2011 with support of local committee:

- 1- Organization and participation of the V LASSE, February 20-March 1 2011, Guarulhos, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- 2- Participation and distribution of the book Las Crisis Epilépticas during the II Symposium on Epilepsy, at Clínica Las Condes, Santiago, Chile, 27-28 May 2011(local support by Dra. Loreto Ríos)
- 3- Organization of one Educational Course in Caracas, November 12, 2011; 200 copies of the book are being printed in Venezuela (sponsored by Abbott). The local support is by Dra. Guilca Contreras.
- 4- Organization of Educational Course in Guatemala, local contact is Dr. José Manuel Pérez.
- 5- The first textbook of ALADE was “**Semiología de las crisis epilépticas (Seizures semiology)**” edited by Silvia Kochen (Argentina) and Elza Marcia Yacubian (Brazil), Printing of 1000 copies of the book in Argentina with an academic grand of Abbott. Actually this text is distributing in all Latin-America.

4) **Projects (Fellowship in epileptology and neurophysiology)**

5 bursaries and 11 positions were offered in the call for applications that could be opened after the budget approval, end of Feb 2011, with a deadline submission for applicants as April 15 2011. Eleven applications were received and submitted to evaluation by ALADE commission. 5 bursaries were given: Dra. María Angélica Uscátegui (Colombia) starting August 2011 at Universidade de Campinas (Brazil); Enrique Ortega (Córdoba, Argentina) starting September 2011 in Hospital de Clinicas de Ribeirao Preto (Brazil); Nicolás Garófalo (Cuba) who will start in November 2011 at the Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo (Brazil); Angela Pérez (Colombia) starting September 2011 in Ribeirao Preto (Brazil) and Silvia Marca (Bolivia) who started at the Epilepsy Center in Santiago de Chile in September 2011. Further, those applicants not awarded with bursaries were offered to benefit from the possibility of performing the fellowships in the remaining positions if they could obtain support from other sources. Dr. Alberto Castaño (Colombia) started this way his training at the Universidade de Campinas (Brazil). Because of the delayed timeline and further difficulties with visa issues, fellowships started recently, and apart from the enthusiastic messages from the trainees and "lack of problems" informal reports from the responsible of the Centers, formal reports on the experience will have to wait until mid-end of 2012.

5) Latin American Epilepsy Surgery Subcommittee

The ILAE Commission on Latin American Affairs with the approval of the ILAE President, Peter Wolf, appointed a new Latin American Epilepsy Surgery Subcommittee. The members of this Subcommittee are: Mario Alonso (Chair, Mexico), Americo Sakamoto (Secretary, Brazil), Carlos Barzallo (Ecuador), Manuel Campos (Chile).

The term of this Subcommittee will be the same as the ILAE Commission on Latin American Affairs. The main goals of this Subcommittee are improving the epilepsy surgery gap in Latin America, promote education and research on epilepsy surgery and, work closely with the Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE).

During May 2011 was the 2° Regional Meeting in Epilepsy Surgery, in Cordoba, Argentina (Chairman Dr. Adrian Muñoz), with delegates of many Epilepsy Centers of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. This activity will be continuing each year in different countries.

The main achievement of this Subcommittee on 2011 has been the accomplishment of the first **Fellowship in Epilepsy Surgery**. Due to the underdevelopment of Epilepsy surgery in many countries in the region, we obtained ILAE support for one fellowship in surgical treatment of epilepsies (neurosurgeon), with Dr. Mario Alonso at the National Neurological and Neurosurgical Institute of Mexico as responsible and coordinator. The first fellowship was for a young colleague from Peru (Dr. Carlos Mao Vasquez), who returned to Peru and performed the first Epilepsy surgery at Peruvian National Institute of Neurological Sciences

(Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Neurológicas de Perú). Actually we have as second fellow (2011-12) a Dr. Rafael Leonardo from Honduras.

6) Relationships with north America sub-commission:

The LA Commission worked together with the North American Commission and her chair (Jacqueline French, USA) and the Education Task Force of the North American Region. Our main point goal was education, through the program “Partnering Epilepsy Centers in the Americas (PECA)”. This program was developed by José Cavazos (USA) with an economic support of the industry (UCB). It consists in visiting American professors in Latin-American epilepsy centers giving support for the development in specific area of the epilepsies. Many countries were involved: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, etc.

We have a meeting together at the last International Epilepsy Congress in Rome, September 2011.

7) ILAE chapters in Latin-America:

- a) New Chapters: In the region only 2 countries did not have ILAE chapters yet (Bolivia and El Salvador). In the last year, with the participation of Eduardo Barragan (secretary our commission) and Samuel Wiebe (general secretary ILAE), both countries were accepted during the ILAE assemble at International Epilepsy Congress in Rome (September 2011).
- b) Renewal of already established ILAE chapters: Due to lack of recent and updated information on some chapters, policies were conducted to contact them and to help them to give a new impulse on their activities. A good example was Nicaragua; this country is again involved in our ILAE activities. Our tasks on the topic are not finished yet. We would also like to include new physicians in the management of each chapter, because one of our main duties is identification of new and young colleagues with interest in epilepsy on the region. These people will be the next generation for the development the epilepsy care in Latin America.

8) Regional Journals in Epilepsy

There are 3 Epilepsy Journals in Latin America, where now is possible to publish the local research. The “Neurophysiologic Journal” from Brazil, it is published in English, “Revista Chilena de Epilepsia”, published in Spanish and “Revista Uruguaya de Epilepsia” has been published since the early 90’s, but so far it has only a local distribution.

9) Work together with IBE (International Bureau for Epilepsy)

Our commission has an excellent relationship with the Latin American IBE commission (Lilia Nuñez, chair, Mexico and Tomás Mesa secretary, Chile) and the international vice-president (Carlos Acevedo, Chile).

We work together in academic and social activities for development of the epilepsy in the region and we organize together the LACE.

Our next step is work in the Global Campaign “Epilepsy out the shadows” together with the World Health Organization (WHO). Also our target is to include the epilepsies in the PAHO (Pan-American Health Organization) agenda in the next meeting of the health minister with the PAHO.

Accomplishments:

- Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsies for the Americas (PAHO, ILAE and IBE).
- V Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy (LASSE).
- The Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE)
- Creation of the Fellowship in Epilepsy in Latin-America.
- Establishing a Collaborative Educational work with the ILAE North American Commission.

Recommendations for future work:

- 1) Support the Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsies for the Americas.
- 2) Support to LASSE as an important educational activity.
- 3) Support to the Latin American congresses, as the main activity in our region.
- 4) Continuous support to the Latin American Epilepsy Academy (ALADE) and the regional educational activities.

Summary: Based on this team work, the ILAE Commission on Latin America affairs took a big step forward, becoming a mature region: with the main issue Strategy and Plan of “Action on Epilepsies for the Americas”, the successful the V Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy (LASSE), also with the Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE); establishment of new targets, like the Epilepsy fellowship; development of a Web-site with the main conferences on LACE and the collaboration with the ILAE North American Commission. We still have several challenges in order to improve epilepsy health care, research and education in our region.