

LATIN-AMERICAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

Commission Members:

Chair	Manuel Campos, Chile
Secretary	Eduardo Barragán (México)
Treasurer	Patricia Braga (Uruguay)
LASSE	Esper Abrao Cavalheiro (Brasil)
	Franz Chaves Sell (Costa Rica)
	Beatriz González del Castillo (Venezuela)
	Salvador González-Pal (Cuba)
	Silvia Kochen (Argentina)
	Magda Nunes (Brazil)

Subcommissions and Members Task force on Access to Care:

Marco Medina (Vice-President and EC Liaison, Honduras)

Alejandro Scaramelli (Ex-Officio, Uruguay)

Samuel Wiebe (EC Liaison, Canada)

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. Eleven physicians compose the Commission, but also all Latin-American ILAE Chapters are involved.

The first meeting was accomplished during the International Epilepsy Congress at Budapest in July 2010. There we established the preliminary plan with the Executive Committee of ILAE.

The Latin American Commission has as objective to improve the diagnosis and treatment of the epilepsies in Latin American, in the frame of our ILAE politics and its Strategic Plan.

Commission Activities from July 2011 through July 2012

1. The Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsy

On September 2011 the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in its 51st Annual Assembly approved the "Strategy and Plan of Action for Epilepsy" for the Americas (1), which has the support of the International League against Epilepsy (ILAE) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE). The plan of action's aim is that the governments, through their Ministries of Health, with the support of PAHO, ILAE and IBE of the respective countries, support the creation of national programs and legislation about epilepsy, and improve those that already exist. The plan includes a goal of guaranteeing complete medical attention to every patient with epilepsy and at least four basic antiepileptic drugs (valproic acid,

carbamazepine, phenytoin and phenobarbital), in addition to actions that allow them to improve their quality of life in every area, so that they can be socially integrated and break down the associated stigma that comes with an epilepsy diagnosis. This challenge is already on course and it is a duty for everyone involved in the treatment of people with epilepsy to support the initiatives of the Strategic Plan, especially before the health authorities of the Latin American governments.

The main issue for us during 2011-2012 and our duty for the next few years is to develop epilepsy programs in all regional countries, and improve the prevention, diagnostic, treatment and quality of life in all people with epilepsy.

The Strategic Plan promotes 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 multi-spectral response needed for the execution of this strategy and plan of action. The main persons to reach this plan were Dr Jorge Rodriguez (PAHO), Dr Carlos Acevedo (IBE) and Dr Marco Medina (ILAE). We held a meeting in October 2011 in Honduras to prepare the strategies, with participation of authorities from WHO, ILAE and IBE.

Between 2011-2012 all ILAE and IBE Chapters in Latin America have made contact with the local Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and together have visited the local health minister authorities in order to develop a "national epilepsy program" in each country in Latin America.

2. VI Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy (LASSE). February 2012, São Paulo, Brazil

Prof Esper Abrao Cavalheiro organizes LASSE with the support of many Brazilian colleagues (Drs Elza Marcia Yacubian, Americo Sakamoto, Fernando Cendes, etc). The LASSE VI received more than 50 young professionals from across Latin America for a full ten-day course. Attendees learned through conferences and working on scientific projects. The program is supported by ILAE (20%); the rest of the resources came from the Brazilian Government and research agencies. Also the success of LASSE depends on the generosity of the many faculty (epileptologists) in great relationship with ILAE.

The previous LASSE were:

- a) The first LASSE: "Epilepsy: Translating basic knowledge into clinical applications," was held 4-14 February 2007
- b) The II LASSE: "Increasing knowledge and decreasing treatment gap," was held 7-17 February 2008

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- c) The III LASSE: "Epileptogenesis in the developing brain: Basis for treatment and prevention", 4-14, February 2009
- d) The IV LASSE: "Epilepsy and Time," 1-9, February 2010)
- e) The V LASSE: "Epilepsy, behavior and cognition," 20 February to 1 March 2011

The LASSE VI was run 24 February to 3 March 2012, organized at the Santa Monica Hotel and Convention Center in Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil. The main topic was "Symptomatic Epilepsy: A critical updating."

A special event, during the LASSE VI, was a special award to Prof Arturo Carpio from Ecuador for his work devoted to the development of epilepsy treatment in Ecuador and Latin America.

3. Latin American Epilepsy Congress (LACE)

The LACE is our main regional activity organized every two years together with the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) Commission in Latin America.

Quito, declared a World Heritage Site by the UNSECO, was delighted to receive around 800 attendees during the 7th Latin American Epilepsy Congress which took place 14-17 November in the Ecuadorian capital city. The event was sponsored by the ILAE and the IBE. The Latin American Epilepsy Commission and the American Academy of Epilepsy also played an outstanding role in the congress organization. The "Liga Ecuatoriana Contra la Epilepsia" was in charge of the local organization. The president of the local Committee was Dr Patricio Abad.

The Congress offered a high level scientific program. Many aspects of epilepsy were included, from molecular neurobiological principles, new therapeutic advances and a broad psychosocial agenda. Special attention was given to the PAHO/OMS initiative tied in with the Strategy and Action Plan for Epilepsy that urges to the Ministers of Health of the Region to make epilepsy a priority during the next decade. Also a review and validation of the new epilepsy classification and coding took place during the Congress. During the opening ceremony Dr Patricio Abad Herrera President of the Congress welcomed colleagues from Latin America and the globe. During his speech, he stressed the importance of seeing a strong Latin American union. "Speak with one voice," he asked, quoting president of the ILAE, Dr Solomon "Nico" Moshé. The importance of the academy in the Region has been growing in the last decade. This Congress was the right place to review all the achievements. The Congress served also as an opportunity to discuss and find new ways to reduce the epilepsy gap. Actually, as soon as the congress activities ended some of the newspapers and the TV media highlighted this

important event. We really hope that this event has fulfilled the attendee's expectations. We are looking forward to meeting all colleagues in the next LACE meeting.

4. Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE)

ALADE depends on our Commission and is its academic arm. The members of the ALADE Executive Committee are: Elza M Yacubian (Brazil), Jaime Carrizosa (Secretary, Colombia), Roberto Caraballo (Argentina), Loreto Ríos (Chile) and Guilca Contreras (Venezuela). They will serve from 2012 to 2015.

ALADE Mission: To provide and promote epilepsy education and research with excellence, quality, and 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 healthcare 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 healthcare of people with epilepsy.

Educational Activities – ALADE 2011-12

- a. 6th Latin-American Summer School On Epilepsy (LASSE VI) – Symptomatic Epilepsy: A critical updating – 24 February to 2 March 2012
- b. ALADE Course in Guatemala – at the Medical School of the Universidad Estatal de San Carlos de Guatemala and Colegio de Médicos de Guatemala, 23 March 2012
- c. Launching of the e-book "EEG of Epilepsies" in Portuguese – São Paulo, 21 April 2012 – A one-day Course with the participation of Brazilian epileptologists and one Argentinian (Dr Roberto Caraballo) – 100 participants
- d. ALADE Course in Cuba – 9-10 May 2012. Centro Internacional de Restauración Neurológica, 100 participants
- e. Selection of candidates – Short Programs on Epileptology 2013
- f. Launching of the ALADE e-book in Portuguese distributed to participants of the Brazilian Neurology Congress in Goiânia, 4-8 August 2012
- g. Five courses during the Quito Congress: 1. Basic Science; 2. Pharmacology of epilepsies; 3. Course on EEG with the distribution of the e-book "EEG of Epilepsies" in Spanish; 4. Epilepsy throughout life with the distribution of the book and CD Las crisis epilépticas; 5. Genetics of epilepsy

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5. Projects (Fellowship in epileptology and neurophysiology)

Four bursaries and 11 positions were offered in the call for applications after the budget approval (end of February 2012) with a deadline submission for applicants of 2011. Eleven applications were received and submitted for evaluation by ALADE Commission. Four bursaries were given at Universidade de Campinas (Brazil), Hospital de Clinicas de Ribeirao Preto (Brazil) and Hospital Ramos Mejias (Buenos Aires, Argentina). Further, those applicants not awarded with bursaries were offered the possibility of performing the fellowships in the remaining positions if they could obtain support from other sources.

6. 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, promoting education and research on epilepsy surgery and, working closely with the Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE).

The main achievement of this subcommittee 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 coordinator.

7. Relationships with North American Subcommittee:

The Latin American Commission worked together with the North American Commission and her chair and the Education Task Force of the North American Region. Our main goal was "the Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsies for the Americas" and also education, through the program "Partnering Epilepsy Centers in the Americas (PECA)." This program was developed with economic support from industry (UCB). It consists of visiting American professors in Latin-American epilepsy centers giving support for the development in specific areas of the epilepsies. Many countries were involved: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, etc.

This year CAMELICE (Mexican League Against Epilepsy) received 20 fellowships for the best young researchers to attend the American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting. The persons involved in these activities were

Eduardo Barragán and José Cavazos (AES). This reflects the possibility and the capacity of collaboration between not only two different Chapters but between Commissions and can be a model for planning this kind of support in the next Latin American Congress.

8. ILAE Chapters in Latin-America:

- a) New Chapters: Bolivia and El Salvador were incorporated officially as new Chapters at the International Epilepsy Congress in Roma (Italy). Dr Mario Camargo is the new president of ILAE Bolivia Chapter and Dra Claudia Valencia of El Salvador.
- b) Renewal of already established ILAE Chapters: Due to lack of recent and updated information on some Chapters, efforts were made to contact them and help them to give an update on their activities. A good example was Nicaragua. This country is again involved in our ILAE activities. Our tasks 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 in the Region. These people will be the next generation for the development of epilepsy care in Latin America.

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 epilepsy in the Region and together we organize the LACE. Our next step is to work on "The Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsies for the Americas" together with the World Health Organization (WHO).

Accomplishments (2009-2010)

- Successful activities on the Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsies for the Americas
- VI Latin American Summer School on Epilepsy (LASSE)
- Successful Latin American Epilepsy Congresses in Ecuador (2012)
- The Latin American Academy of Epilepsy (ALADE)
- Creation of the Fellowship in Epilepsy
- Establishing collaborative educational work with the ILAE North American Commission

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Recommendations for Future Work

- 1) Continuation 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 (i.e., Mesoamerica and Caribbean, Andean, etc.).
- 5) Develop fellowships in our Region for young epileptologists, where main epilepsy centers in the Region will be involved.

Summary: Based on this team work, the Commission on Latin American Affairs took a big step forward, becoming a mature Region with our main issue the Strategy and Plan of "Action on Epilepsies for the Americas." We must continue with the success of the 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 website with the main Conferences on LACE and the collaboration with the ILAE North American Commission. We still have several challenges in order to improve the prevention, epilepsy healthcare, education and research in our Region.

Reported by
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