

Report of educational activities developed during 2011

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY HELD BY THE LATINAMERICAN EPILEPSY ACADEMY (ALADE)

(ALADE Activities 2011, reported by Elza M Yacubian)

1. Organization and participation of the V LASSE, February 20-March 1 2011, Guarulhos, SP. Distribution of the book *Las Crisis Epilépticas*;
2. Participation and distribution of the book *Las Crisis Epilépticas* during the Symposium on Epilepsy, Santiago, Chile, 27-28 May 2011;
3. Printing of 1000 copies of the book in Argentina (sponsored by Abbott- Argentina);
4. Organization of one Educational Course in Caracas, November 12, 2011; 200 copies of the book are being printed in Venezuela (sponsored by Abbott);
5. Conclusion of negotiation with Abbott Laboratories (Brazil) for printing 2000 copies of the book EEG of Epilepsy on DVD (distribution programmed in Brazil for January 2012);
6. In negotiation, printing of the last e-book in Spanish to be distributed during the LA Congress in Quito, November 2012;
7. Negotiation, already concluded, with the University of Quito to print textbooks for ALADE courses during the LA Congress in Quito, November 2012;
8. Organization of five ALADE Courses, LA Congress, Quito, November 2012.

LATIN AMERICAN SUMMER SCHOOL ON EPILEPSY (LASSE)

(reported by Esper Cavalheiro)

The fifth edition of the LASSE focused on "Epilepsy, behavior and cognition" was held at the Hotel and Convention Center Santa Monica, in São Paulo, from February 20 to March 2, 2011.

As in previous editions, the scientific program was aimed at a translational thematic allowing young professionals to work with broader issues leading to the welfare of people with epilepsy. The students were selected from a population of more than 300 requests, of which 60 were chosen to participate in the LASSE V. We had also the participation of students from Spain and Morocco. The analysis of the assessments made daily by students allow to check that the goals of LASSE were properly understood by them and that they participated in all activities with enthusiasm. The comments and observations of teachers were also the most favorable.

During LASSE V, two other specific reunions occurred: (a) The Latin-American Commission, chaired by Dr. Manuel Campos, Chile and (b) ALADE, chaired by Dr. Elza Marcia Yacubian, Brazil, when it was suggested that the subject of the next LASSE could be "Symptomatic Epilepsy".

FELLOWSHIPS IN EPILEPTOLOGY

(Project starting 2011, reported by Patricia Braga)

Five 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 Apr 15, 2011. Eleven applications were received and submitted to evaluation by ALADE commission. Five bursaries were given:

- Dr. María Angélica Uscátegui (Colombia) starting Aug 2011 at Universidade de Campinas (Brazil)
- Enrique Ortega (Córdoba, Argentina) starting Sep 2011 in Hospital de Clinicas de Ribeirao Preto (Brazil)
- Nicolás Garófalo (Cuba) who could start in Feb 2012 at the Universidade Federal de Sao Paulo (Brazil)
- Angela Pérez (Colombia) starting Sept 2011 in Ribeirao Preto (Brazil) and

- Silvia Marca (Bolivia) who started at the Epilepsy Center in Santiago de Chile in Sept 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 later than expected, and apart from the enthusiastic messages from most of the trainees, formal reports on the experience will have to wait until mid-end of 2012.

FELLOWSHIP IN EPILEPSY SURGERY (NEUROSURGERY)

(reported by Mario Alonso Vanegas)

The epilepsy surgery fellowship program conducted at the National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery with recognition by the National University of México has been active since 2005 on a yearly basis for young Latin American neurosurgeons interested in specialized training, acquiring better knowledge and skills, both in surgical and research techniques, in the area of Epilepsy surgery in an Advanced Epilepsy Surgery Center. It is an important concern for the staff of this program to ensure and encourage assistance actions guided by strict ethical values. Considering that in many cases epilepsy surgery represents surgical strategies, which are considered expensive or scientifically innovative, it is vitally important that the specialist offers the patient surgical alternatives under strict ethical considerations of cost-benefit for the patient (and /or family) and the institution.

The course encourages the acquisition of knowledge in specific areas of the neurosciences, which have probably remained incomplete in the previous years of training (usually a five year training in neurosurgery), and aims to develop necessary and specific skills to offer patients the best possible treatment considering the patients integral bio-psycho-social health.

In the last two academic years the program has received sponsorship by the ILAE in terms of one scholarship for one Latin American (non Mexican) neurosurgeon expressing a wish to complete the program. So far the ILAE involvement (specifically monetary) has enabled completion of the course for a Peruvian neurosurgeon (Carlos Mao Vasquez) who upon completion has been integrated in the Neurological Sciences Institute in Lima Peru where a basic epilepsy center has been formally initiated, and a neurosurgeon from Honduras who will continue his training for a further 6 months (without stipend) to complete necessary requirements. In the past two years another 5 residents have completed their training and have been instrumental in either initiating or completing epilepsy surgery programs in their native countries and Mexico (2).

Selection of candidates is based on completion of the specific requirements by the INNN, a competence exam, and letters of recommendation. It has been our policy to allocate the specific budget of the ILAE to benefit neurosurgeons from countries in which there are no formal or validated epilepsy surgery programs. Of course this has represented a problem related to the often-deficient training of human resources from this specific countries, meaning that achieving a successful completion of the specific medical, surgical and research skills may take longer than expected. Nonetheless we consider that a good success rate has been achieved in terms of imitation of formal epilepsy surgery programs and strong presence of the fellows in the Annual Meeting of both the European and American Epilepsy Societies.