

ILAE – Vice President 2022 Annual Report

It is a great honor for me to serve as vice president and to be part of this Executive Committee and the ever-expanding activities of the ILAE with impressive recent achievements in the areas of education, publication, and research, among others. This first year was a year of trying to get back to normal after the difficulties we all experienced due to the pandemic returning to in-person meetings and new possibilities, such as hybrid meetings and congresses.

The main activities undertaken this year consisted of actions in my role as liaison for the Latin American region.

A tele-epilepsy program for indigenous peoples was started in the north of Argentina. The program, developed together with Dr. Sebastián Fortini and Dr. Lucas Beltrán, consists of patient care and educational activities and is addressed to primary healthcare providers working in indigenous communities. In Argentina there are around 400,000 aboriginals that speak different languages and are generally underserved. This pilot program was designed for future dissemination in the Latin American region and may be adapted for its use worldwide.

I have especially supported the work of the Young Epilepsy Section (YES) in the region. In different online and face-to-face meetings we have discussed the vision and the mission of the ILAE YES as well as their future projects. Advances have been made in the development of an Epilepsy Journal in Spanish responding to the need of an enormous population of Spanish speaking healthcare professionals that often do not have access to the literature in the English language and opening their possibilities to publish their experiences.

Another important project is the program for the training of teachers in epilepsy to create awareness and knowledge of epilepsy in the school. In 2019, we developed a three-day, government-endorsed program including lectures, videos, and a short movie, providing continuing education credit to participants. For the course, our book "[Epilepsia en la escuela](#)" is used. This year, a working group has been set up to disseminate this program in a hybrid version, using face-to-face meetings and telemedicine, in different provinces in Argentina. Participants in the group are Drs. Sebastian Fortini (Tucumán), Alberto Espeche (Salta), Pedro Cachia and Santiago Galicchio (Santa Fé), and Marco Semprino (Neuquén).

In this line, I participated in an online meeting on 31 March 2022, organized by Dr. Sulena Singh from the Guru Gobind Singh Government Medical College and Hospital in Faridkot who presented an intervention program for schoolteachers endorsed by the state School Education



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Department and funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research in Delhi. The program, a three-year project of surveys and training activities with guidance of Dr. Gagandeep Singh, aims at creating epilepsy-smart schools through teacher training.

Advances were made in the development of a new strategic plan and plan of action on epilepsy in Latin America and the Caribbean 2021-2031. The Working group consists of Carlos Acevedo, Tomás Mesa, Mario Alonso Vanegas, Marco Tulio Medina, and Roberto Caraballo. Other key members of the group are Renato Oliveira, Claudina Cayetano, and Jorge Rodriguez.

The priority areas considered are research, epidemiology, legislation, prevention, mental health, telemedicine, education, and online training.

The Strategic Plan is developed with support from the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). Devora Kestel from the WHO is invited as a consultant.

The update of the strategic plan for the region is being developed in consonance with the update of the Strategic Plan of the ILAE and the global action plan of the WHO. In agreement with the WHO action plan, other neurologic entities including comorbidities of epilepsy are considered.

As liaison for ILAE Latin America, I participated in the organizing committee of XII Latin American Epilepsy Congress that took place on 1-4 October 2022 in Medellín, Colombia, and as the part of the Executive Committee I have collaborated actively in the Scientific Committee of the next International Epilepsy Congress. In addition, I participated in several commissions, including the Management Committee Liaison, the Latin American Regional board, the Diagnostics Methods Commission, the Pediatrics Commission, and the Telemedicine Task Force.



Dr. Sebastián Fortini and Dr. Lucas Beltrán with primary healthcare providers and patients from indigenous communities in the north of Argentina.



Dr. Lucas Beltrán giving a course on epilepsy for primary healthcare providers in indigenous communities in the north of Argentina.



Organizers and speakers of the meeting on Telemedicine in Ushuaia, the southern-most city of the world.



Participants in the meeting of the YES-Argentina held on 22 September 2022 as a premeeting to the Argentine Epilepsy Congress of the Argentine League against Epilepsy (LACE).

Looking back on the year, the inspiring meeting with the people from the University and Hospital in Faridkot on the training of schoolteachers in epilepsy, the telemedicine meeting in Ushuaia, and the success of the epilepsy program for indigenous peoples were definitively the highlights of 2022.

Roberto Horacio Caraballo
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