

Neurosurgery in the South Cone of Latin-America

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Worldwide, there is on average one neurosurgeon per 230,000 people. In Europe 1/121,000, North America 1/81,000, Japan 1/20,000, Israel and Australia 1/200,000 and Latin America 1/110,000, which represent an acceptable ratio for the Southern Cone of Latin America. However, in less developed regions there are major deficiencies in the infrastructure needed to support complicated procedures. Few hospitals in these regions can afford the full range of highly expensive diagnostic and surgical equipment.

In our Countries - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay - our main concern nowadays is education because the teaching integration in neurosurgery from molecular levels to social ones, from basic sciences to the clinic, and from the individual to the community has become the challenge of the new century. The development of all fully trained and critically thinking Neurosurgeons should include opportunities for research. Patients' care and clinical research cannot be separate.

Historically the institutional organization of the Latin American Neurosurgery was born in the Southern Cone thanks to the talent of the Masters in the 40s. The first World Congress of Neurosurgery was organized in 1957 in Brussels, Belgium with the participation of delegations from Europe and North and South America. But twelve years earlier, in March 1945, the first South American Congress of Neurosurgery was held in Montevideo, Uruguay. This milestone in the history of international neurosurgery was organized by Alejandro Schroeder from Uruguay, Elyseu Paglioli from Brazil and Ramon Carrillo and Rafael Babini from Argentina.

Alejandro Schroeder, Elyseu Paglioli, Ramón Carrillo and Rafael Babini decided to become the "Permanent Committee"; the Congress adopted the name of "Congresos Sudamericanos de Neurocirugía", and drafted the appropriate by laws stipulating the holding of future Congresses every two years, alternating the host Countries.

It is important to point out some personal aspects of

these founding fathers of Southern Cone Neurosurgery:

Uruguay:

Alejandro Schroeder, traveled to Europe in 1925 and made contact with figures of first level as Prof. Nonne, Hamburg, Prof. Alfons Jacob, Prof. Vogt in Berlin, Prof. Guillaín in Paris, and Prof. Pío del Río Hortega in Madrid and finally with Prof. Otfrid Foerster (1873-1941) in Breslau. On February 23, 1937 Alejandro Schroeder was appointed as Professor and Director, Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery in Montevideo.

Roman AranaIniguez, Resident in Neurosurgery in Santiago de Chile, with Professor Alfonso Asenjo (1943-1944) and Resident's Neuropsychiatric Institute, Illinois, under Drs. Percival Bailey, Eric Oldberg, and Paul Bucy (1943-1947); resident also at the Lahey Clinic, with Drs. James L. Poppen and Gilbert Horrax, in the Neurological Institute at Presbyterian Hospital of Columbia University, New York, with Drs. Lawrence Pool, John Scarff, and Lester Mount (1952) and in the Neurophysiological laboratory of the Veterans Hospital Long Beach, California, under HW Magoun and John D. French (1954). He was appointed Professor and Director of the Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery at Montevideo in 1957.

Chile:

Alfonso Asenjo Gomez, On 19 May 1950 the Ministry of Education through a supreme decree - created the Institute of Neurosurgery and Brain Research in Chile.

The Institute not only had an impact on Chile, but also in all South America.

Dr. Asenjo was the first President of the Society of Neurosurgery Chile, established on April 14, 1957. He was also one of the founders of the South American Congress of Neurosurgery.

He was awarded with the National Science Award in 1972. He is the author of over 200 publications.

Luciano Basauri, His preference for neurosurgery began practicing in the Institute of Neurosurgery, where he became part of the team Asenjo composed with his colleagues Reinaldo Poblete and Juan Luis Fierro, with

whom he created the Society of Neurosurgery Chile. During the course of his long practice Dr. Basauri showed special interest in Pediatric Neurosurgery. He was the President and Secretary General of the ISPN and founder of FLANC.

Brasil:

Eliseu Paglioli (Caxias do Sul, December 28, 1898 - Porto Alegre, December 22, 1985), together with Alejandro Schroeder and Rafael Babini, organized the first Congress of Neurosurgery in Latin America in 1945. In 1952, he became Rector of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, a position he would occupy for twelve years. He was a colleague of Henry de Martel and Clovis Vincent in Paris and Professor and Director of the University Institute of Neurosurgery in Porto Alegre, Brazil. He created a school of International prestige in the south of the Country.

Paulo Niemeyer, (Rio de Janeiro, April 14, 1914 - March 10, 2004) He was the last member of the Standing Committee of the South American Congress before the creation of the FLANC.

Extraordinary teacher of Neurosurgery, his interest in all subspecialties is summarized in his extensive bibliographic production of Anatomy, Pathology, Tumor Surgery, Aneurysms, Epilepsy, Pituitary, and Trauma.

Peru:

Esteban Rocca created the first Peruvian Neurosurgical Service at the Hospital Obrero in Lima in 1947. He has published over 360 papers. His most important books are: Treating Pituitary adenomas, Postoperative epilepsy, Gliomas and malignant tumors of the brain and Plastic Neurosurgery. He was the organizer of the Latin American Congress and member also of the Standing Committee before the creation of FLANC.

Argentina:

In Argentina the first manifestations of our specialty are due to great individuals not content to be mere spectators of the evolution of medical ideas but wanting to be real protagonists. The three fundamental pillars of Neurosurgery of the first half of the twentieth century were formed by three Argentine youth who in turn lay the foundation of neurosurgery in Argentina. Ernesto Dowling at Peter Bent Brigham under the direction of Cushing, Manuel Balado at the Mayo Clinic under the direction of Adson and German Dickmann of John Hopkings

led by Dandy.

Of course between these founders of Neurosurgery in Argentina we must also include Ramon Carrillo. As a young Neurosurgeon, he directed his view to scientific Centers of Europe for three years; in Amsterdam, under the direction of Brouwer the first neurologist in Europe and also with Oljenick, disciple of Cushing and Ariens Kappers. Balado and Carrillo systematized the Iodine Ventriculography for the diagnosis of posterior fossa tumors. With an unparalleled virtuosity, all the mentioned here in the Southern Cone of America laid the foundation stone of Neurosurgery we have today. They pass on to future generations the responsibility of carrying out work based on the same values that inspired them: study, work, honesty and ethics.

Today in the great capitals of the Cono Sur of Latin America Neurosurgery is practiced according to technical standards established in the developed world. These cities have first international level centers operated by neurosurgeons who not only practice assistance of excellence but also as a result of their vast experience and through their active participation in conferences, symposia and publications contribute to the overall development of our specialty.

My Vision about the Future of INJ:

I have no doubt of the success that can reach a Journal which will have Madjid Samii as the General Editor. The transmission of knowledge through traditional means, Journals, Conferences, Symposiums and electronic means are numerous today, but it's hard to be different and original in their design. Even though the general guidelines established by Prof. Samii in his educational Programs for many years basically has consisted in presentations of results of basic or clinical research, the exposure of an acquired experience, or a particular case, etc., what Samii has established as difference has always been the exchange of ideas and prolonged discussion. Following this line of thought, I believe that INJ should set as its Editorial policy - after the submission of a paper and before publishing - a lengthy discussion between experts in different branches of Neuroscience; in the graphic or electronic version. We are ready to work with enthusiasm in this challenging project.