



International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MARCH 28-29 , 2012**

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM 8.4. : IAPB REGIONAL UPDATES – LATIN AMERICA

LATIN AMERICA 2011 SECOND SEMESTER PROGRESS REPORT

The past semester was a very productive one for VISION 2020 in Latin America (V2020LA) with great success made in strengthening the regional network, advancing epidemiological work within the region, and transforming prevention of blindness activities in LA into a more targeted, strategic process. Key semester highlights include the 1st Latin America Training Consortium Meeting in Orlando in October, the beginning of the regional strategic planning process in November, and the progress made in regional guidelines, curricula, and publications.

Key Regional Meetings and Events

Over 5,000 people attended the 29th Congress of the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology (PAAO) met in Buenos Aires on July 6-9. We participated in several advocacy activities with the ICO, held a workshop on the future of residency training in LA, and held a technician training course. With the Nano group, we distributed over 3,000 V2020 LA diabetic retinopathy guideline brochures, over 1,000 of the most recent Spanish editions of the CEHJ, and nearly 500 of previous editions. A meeting of multidisciplinary professionals working in different LV topics also took place, resulting in the ongoing development of the Low Vision guidelines for Latin America.

The Training Consortium began in May with just a few individuals and six institutions whose idea was to create and develop effective strategies for improving the quality and quantity of eye care training for the underserved communities of Latin America. Last semester, it evolved into a comprehensive network of regional training institutions, US academic institutions, and NGOs.

Pictured Below: Training Consortium Meeting in Orlando



The official first meeting of the Latin America Training Consortium took place on October 26 in Orlando, FL, following the annual AAO meeting. Topics discussed include long-term regional needs, sustainability, advocacy, training opportunities for the eye care delivery team, resident exchange programs, international training centres, the creation of a Latin American “ICEH,” international fellowships, the role of USA institutions, and funding. The new Training Consortium Technical Subcommittee under the leadership of Dr Nick Patel was established with the aim to have an action plan finalized by February 1, 2012. The Consortium will be an important part of the regional strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process began in November, which will utilize a situational and SWOT analysis of the National V2020 plans, evaluate the technical subcommittees, and map NGO activity and partnership and a country-by-country breakdown of activity and partnership. The planning will culminate with the March 1-3, 2012 meeting financed by ORBIS and CBM in Lima with up to 40 people in attendance. The meeting will be facilitated by Kristen Eckert, who is also overseeing the planning. A five-year strategic planning document will be drafted that will outline the desired, needed activities within the region and

provide measurable outcomes. The strategic alliance between the IAPB, PAHO, and the PAAO will be considered as a basis for a vision, mission, strategy, objectives, and goals to ultimately find the most regionally/country-appropriate way to strengthen national health systems at large so that they have the resources and the capacity to integrate blindness prevention. The overall objective is to draft a V2020 LA Strategic Plan to guide future operational plans, have “ready made” proposals for other potential donors, and develop advocacy with national governments.

Other Courses and Meetings

The first CEH course for residents in Mexico was held in August in Queretaro and attended by 70 second-year residents. Great advocacy took place, and the professors helped finish the suggested curricula, which is now officially sanctioned by the PAAO as a recommendation to all the training centres in the region. Ultimately, the intent is that the course will be owned by the Mexican Ophthalmology Society, and PBL will be in academic curricula of every program in Mexico. This is important considering Mexico is the largest Spanish speaking country in the world, the home to training consortium programs, and one of the few places in LA where foreigners can still legally be trained in surgical activities. A future prospect for the training consortium is a long-distance, online course opportunity through Dr Ellery Lopez at the *Instituto Mexicano de Oftalmología* in Queretaro.

CBM organized evaluation and planning meetings with local stakeholders in Trujillo, Peru on December 2-3 and in Quito, Ecuador on December 10. The Peru meeting revealed that cataract surgery quality control and follow-up must be improved in future programming, which will require the participation of private stakeholders.

CBM also organized a Community Eye Health (CEH) course in Cochabamba, Bolivia on November 3-5. Twenty-six ophthalmologists attended, including the Bolivian Society of Ophthalmology (BSO), whose participation was essential for the development of activities in the prevention of blindness. While the ophthalmologists were very motivated, advocacy remains a great challenge in Bolivia with the Ministry of Health (MOH), which although invited to the workshop, did not attend. The MOH does not allow for the creation of new NGOs, which is a barrier to establishing local programs. With intent to break this longstanding impasse, IAPB LA (with the support of CBM and Light for the World) has hired a neutral, Paraguay-based representative to travel monthly to Bolivia and work with all groups.

Other news from Bolivia includes work from Fundación Ojos to improve eye health in El Alto and its surroundings. The Foundation installed six ophthalmologic centres, run by local professionals, and attention was permanently established for the population. Educational activities, many targeting women, provided 5,000 people with basic eye health information. An online platform was also set up so that ophthalmologic professionals could acquire knowledge about eye disease treatment.

Low Vision and ROP

The second semester saw advancements in regional Low Vision and ROP initiatives. The Nano Foundation in Argentina and their team of 24 special education teachers exceeded annual targets by assisting 50 adults and 40 kids with low vision and rehabilitation services. They also initiated an ROP program. A football school was created for blind children, and the participating teams played in tournaments all around the country. The XVIII Florencia Mancilla Sports Meeting included the participation of 270 blind and visually impaired children and adults. The Nano Foundation also continued their Veo Veo program, targeting 4,800 students in public schools in Buenos Aires. Students were given glasses and were operated from strabismus, as necessary.



Far left: children with visual impairment play on the new Nano football team.

Left: an adult with low vision is provided with rehabilitation services.

A national and regional LV plan for 2013-2014 was developed in a workshop in Colombia in November by PAHO, CBM, ICEVI, and PAAO. ROP workshops in El Salvador, Mexico, and Venezuela also incorporated LV into their agenda. In Guatemala, regrettably, the visual rehabilitation specialist and the ophthalmologist working on LV retired. Nowadays, people with little professional education are currently assisting LV patients. Fortunately, an ophthalmologic centre for low vision was opened on the private side. Next year the ophthalmologic residents will rotate giving service to low vision patients. To raise LV awareness, breakfasts and meetings were organized with ophthalmologists.

Diabetic Retinopathy

International Diabetes Day Walk in Trujillo, Peru



Retinopathy was also a key focus in the second semester. For International Diabetes Day, a walk was organized with patients from hospitals in Trujillo, Peru. Participants received information about diet and nutrition care.

A campaign for comprehensive diabetic care, prioritizing the diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy was organized. Forty-five diabetics were examined and treated for diabetic retinopathy. They were also examined by General Practitioners and sat in on educational talks regarding foot care and healthy lifestyles. Glucoses test for people over 30 years were given.

Personnel responsible for non-communicable diseases in public health facilities in the region were trained on the prevention of blindness from diabetic retinopathy.

Pictured below: participants in activities for International Diabetes Day.



Paracas Ophthalmologic Association

An agreement was signed with the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia for the completion of a Diploma in the subspecialty of Retina and Vitreous for 2 years. An agreement was signed with the Archbishop Loayza Hospital for cataract surgery and vitrectomy retinal detachment targeting low-income patients. Eighty-eight surgeries and 102 procedures were completed. Through another agreement with the hospital, residents and ophthalmologists are trained through internships. Through an agreement with the Regional Directorate of Puno (rural area), an ophthalmologist finished a 2.5 month internship. An agreement was signed with the Faculty of Medical Technology of Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal (Lima) for their technical internship in our institution.

Once a month, consultations are held in the Miraflores Lions Club (Lima) and every two months in the San Isidro District Municipality in Lima. By agreements with the Puericultorio Aranibar Perez orphanage and Blind Rehabilitation Center, children with visual problems are provided care.

In the Mexico CEH Course in Queretaro also incorporated a module on diabetic retinopathy. During the Mexican Retina Association's 30th Anniversary, a symposium on DR was held. Three national and two foreign teachers attended this event and shared their experience with us. Internist doctors schools' managers, endocrinologists, representatives of the Quintana Roo's health ministry, the managers and members of the Quintana Roo's Ophthalmologists State School and the press were invited as well.

In Chile, Dr. Fernando Barría directed activities including: a Diabetic Retinopathy Update Course in Santiago and Concepción, Diabetes International Day, World Sight Day, JUNAEB meeting for update in assisting policies, communal health course introduced in PACUPO by PAAO, creation of a Clinical guide for diabetic retinopathy and scheduling of future residents courses. He also began a DR survey on behalf of the PAAO.

Communications Updates



The screenshot shows the VISION 2020 website interface. At the top, there is a banner with the text "VISION 2020 THE RIGHT TO SIGHT AMERICAS" and "VISION 2020 Latinoamérica Boletín Trimestral". Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for Inicio, Comité Editorial, Suscríbete, Boletines Anteriores, Links, Facebook, and Twitter. The main content area displays an editorial article titled "Editorial: Retinopathy of prematurity in Latin America" dated 31 diciembre 2011, written by Andrea Zin, MD, PhD, and Fernandes Figueira from the Instituto FIOCRUZ. The article text discusses the control of childhood blindness and the causes of retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) in Latin America. To the right of the article is a Facebook social plugin titled "FACEBOOK OFICIAL" for "IAPB Latin America", showing a "Me gusta" button and a list of 27 people who liked the page, including names like Marialejandi, Van, Jorge, Christian, Maria Marta, Divino, Paz, Laura, Dinesh, Teon, Christian, and Carleste.

ROP was similarly the topic of the December 2011 V2020 LA Trimester Bulletin. With the help of Dr Francisco Martinez Castro, the recent bulletin featured an upgraded format that takes advantage of current social media and social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube to strengthen the regional communication platform.

A major website upgrade took place in September 2011 to display detailed epidemiological data. The new interactive tables and maps were presented during the IAPB COM in Dubai in September and are now available on the V2020LA web site.

The work clearly identified the gaps of knowledge in the 19 countries under our jurisdiction and will help guide research priorities. It will be available to the strategic planning and training consortium meetings and was the summary of a major review published in *Survey of Ophthalmology* in December 2011.

A V2020 LA Virtual Library is under construction. The virtual library, based on the Scribd on-line platform, will be linked to our website and consist of two major catalogues: 1) the UNESCO registry of training materials (a key Consortium meeting output that is being finalized) and 2) a V2020LA catalogue of relevant research, IAPB and WHO materials, and country/regional planning materials.

Overview of Deliverables, Studies, and Publications:

Four national RAAB studies wrapped up in December in Uruguay (funded by fundraising by the National V2020 Committee), El Salvador (UNESCO funded), Peru, and Paraguay (CBM partially-financing Peru and Paraguay, whose studies will provide valuable follow-up information on their respective RACSS conducted eleven and seven years ago). Preliminary data for the four studies will be presented during the Strategic Plan meeting in March in Lima, Peru. Sixteen studies have been done in Latin America, making it the best mapped region in the world. In addition, full translation of the RAAB Manual into Spanish has been completed.

The Diabetic Retinopathy Curricula was published. The Cataract and Low Vision Curricula are finalized, but they are pending publication. The Cataract and Low Vision Guidelines are currently under review by the technical subcommittees and will be finalized in January 2012. The massive review of causes of blindness and visual impairment in Latin America is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2012. Another paper discussing whether gender inequalities exist in LA has been accepted for publication. The Diabetic Retinopathy study using the non mydriatic camera will take off in February 2012, when the camera provider is able to supply it.

The PRECOG study data collection finished October 15th, thirteen months after the initial course conducted by Dr. Nathan Congdon in Lima in September of 2011. The study evaluated outcomes of cataract surgery at the participating institutions, patient follow-up compliance, etc. This will help improve training, patient counselling and selection, monitoring, and follow-up. The results will form part of a worldwide study under the supervision of Dr. Congdon which is expected to be submitted for publication in mid-2012. The participating institutions in LA are two centres from Mexico corresponding to Instituto de la Visión network, Visualiza in Guatemala, Divino Niño Jesús Clinic and IRO (ORBIS partner) in Peru, Fundación Visión in Paraguay and Fundación del Valle de Yaruquí in Ecuador, which all fulfilled their commitments of 100 patients. Two more institutions in Peru were selected, as well as one in the Dominican Republic. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts and offers to help, they were unable to complete the study. In this study, we had the great collaboration from Dr. Nelson Rivera from the ICEE and ORBIS volunteer staff.

As a final note, there will be two abstracts submitted to present posters at the IAPB 9th General Assembly in Hyderabad, India in September. The abstracts cover how the region with ORBIS is bridging the information gap by focusing on the key tools, deliverables, and planning activities of the Training Consortium and the strategic planning process.

WSD activities have been provided in a previous stand-alone report.

RESOLUTION: To welcome and accept the Latin America progress report above.