Departamento de
Farmacobiología
Sede Sur

Cinvestav

November 28th, 2023

Dr. Guilca Contreras

Treasurer of the ILAE Latin-American Commission

Dear Dr. Contreras,

There is a pressing need to address the current significant gaps in treating neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer´s disease (AD) and epilepsy. According to our resources and ethnomedicine, we believe the multicenter collaboration in Latin America is essential to look for new and cheap strategies to control these disorders. For this reason, we organized the second "Seeding Neuroscience Workshop" entitled "Epilepsy and Alzheimer´s disease: Challenges for Latin America" aimed to congregate basic and clinical scientists from Iberoamerica to promote research focused on identifying common mechanisms, evaluate their potential modulation by using in vitro and pre-clinical studies, and outline new directions for research and clinical care of AD and epileptic patients.

The workshop was carried out October 25-28, 2023 as a hybrid event designed to promote translational neuroscience research in the less active countries of the region. We organized this workshop in Lima, Perú because this country has important institutions such as Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, and Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola. Perú´s scientific institutions are focused on generating knowledge in different areas of interest to the country, including scientific research in biomedicine and technology transfer. Despite this, the neuroscientific groups from Perú have low participation in the different programs supported by international organizations such as International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

According to the geographical localization of Perú, it was expected that the organization of the second "Seeding Neuroscience" workshop in Lima city would promote the interaction of scientific groups from Centroamérica with other countries of Iberoamerica. To accomplish this, undergraduate and graduate students, basic scientists, and clinicians from Perú and surrounding nations were invited to participate.

We designed a program that was carried out at the University of San Ignacio de Loyola in Lima city. It focused to present the basic concepts about epilepsy and Alzheimer´s disease, experimental procedures for their study and novel therapeutic strategies for their control. The conferences were organized in to 6 sessions to present the information from the basic concepts to its clinical application. The program included 15 speakers: 3 from Perú, 3 from Mexico, 1 from Panamá, 1 from Colombia, 1 from Puerto Rico, 2 from Argentina, and 4 from Spain.

There was a total of 132 attendants (78 women and 54 men). The attendants were from Argentina (9), Bolivia (11), Brasil (2), Colombia (34), Cuba (1), Ecuador (1), Great Britain (1), Honduras (1), México (36), Nicaragua (1), Panamá (2), Paraguay (1); Perú (19), Puerto Rico (1), República Dominicana (4), Spain (4), and Uruguay (4).

An essential activity was to identify scholarship recipients from different countries of the region without basic Neuroscience research during the workshop organization. We received the application of 10 young neurologists with the support of the Latin American Commission of ILAE. We accepted the application of 7 young neurologists working in an institution of countries without Neuroscience research, but with activities related to Neurology or Neurosurgery. The scholarship recipients were as follows: 2 from Bolivia, 1 from Honduras, 1 from Paraguay, 1 from Nicaragua, 1 from Ecuador, and 1 from Colombia.

The workshop contained sessions to present the opportunities for the establishment of collaborations with basic scientists of countries from Iberoamerica with established societies of Neuroscience. These opportunities included IBRO-LARC grants, DANA Foundation support for Brain Awareness Week, and Marie Curie scholarships from HORIZONT-2020 program.

We also included a talk about the current activities carried out by the “Colegio Colombiano de Neurociencias ”(COLNE). COLNE represents a young association in the field of Neuroscience with significant progress during the last years. The speaker from COLNE showed all the activities carried out in the field of Neuroscience, including Brain Awareness Week, a school of Neuroscience and the Neurodiaspora program.

An additional activity was the design of a multidisciplinary project among the speakers of the workshop and scholarship recipients. This activity was very important because we discussed different important conditions necessary for the establishment of an international collaboration focused on investigating biomarkers associated to the traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI is not investigated in Latin America despite it presents a high prevalence in the region and facilitates post-traumatic epilepsy and Alzheimer´s disease.

The workshop was supported as follows: Latin-American Commission of ILAE (3,000 USD), Neurobiology Commission of ILAE (5,000 USD) and International Brain Research Organization (8,000 USD). EpilepsyX.Net supported the workshop with the organization of the flyer, its distribution through different websites, the registration process as well as the certification of attendance. The Mexican Chapter of ILAE (CAMELICE) and the Center for Research and Advanced Studies (CINVETAV) of Mexico supported the workshop with the organization of the talks and the distribution of the flyer among different institutions of the region. The Invited Speakers and the 7 scholarship recipients received the support of 5 nights’ accommodation, meals, and round-trip tickets.

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We consider that the “Seeding Neuroscience Workshop” entitled “Epilepsy and Alzheimer´s disease: Challenges for Latin America” was remarkably successful. We hope we can continue with this activity to promote basic research in Latin America. Finally, at the same time I strongly wish to mention that the contribution of the ILAE Latin-American Commission was acknowledged at all stages of the Workshop organization.

Sincerely yours,

Luisa Rocha, M.D., Ph.D.

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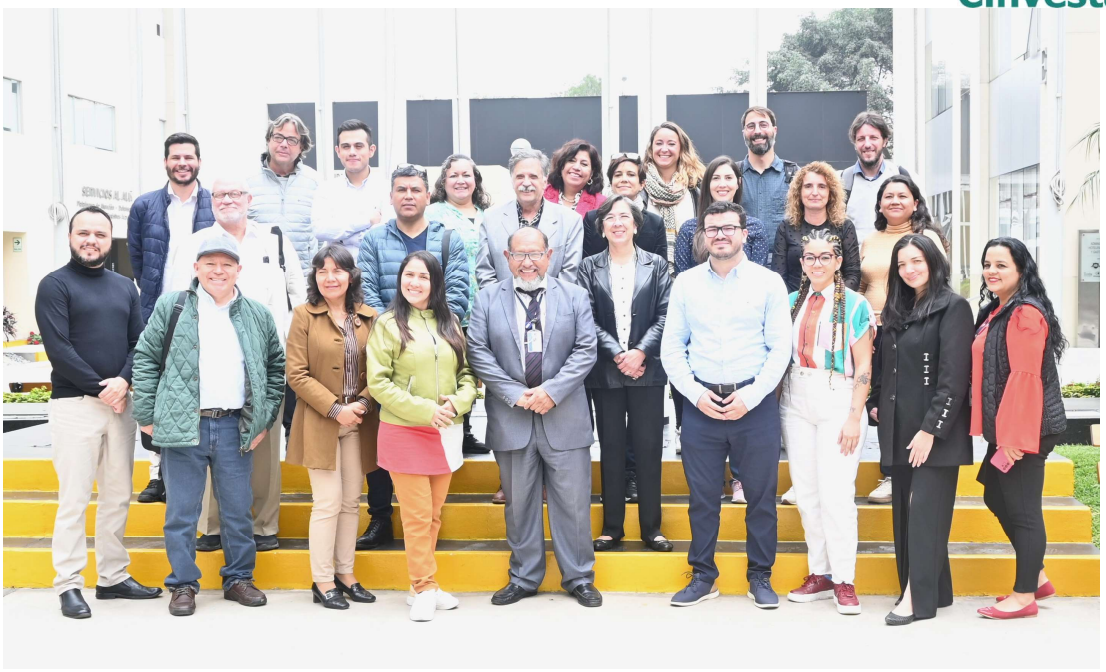

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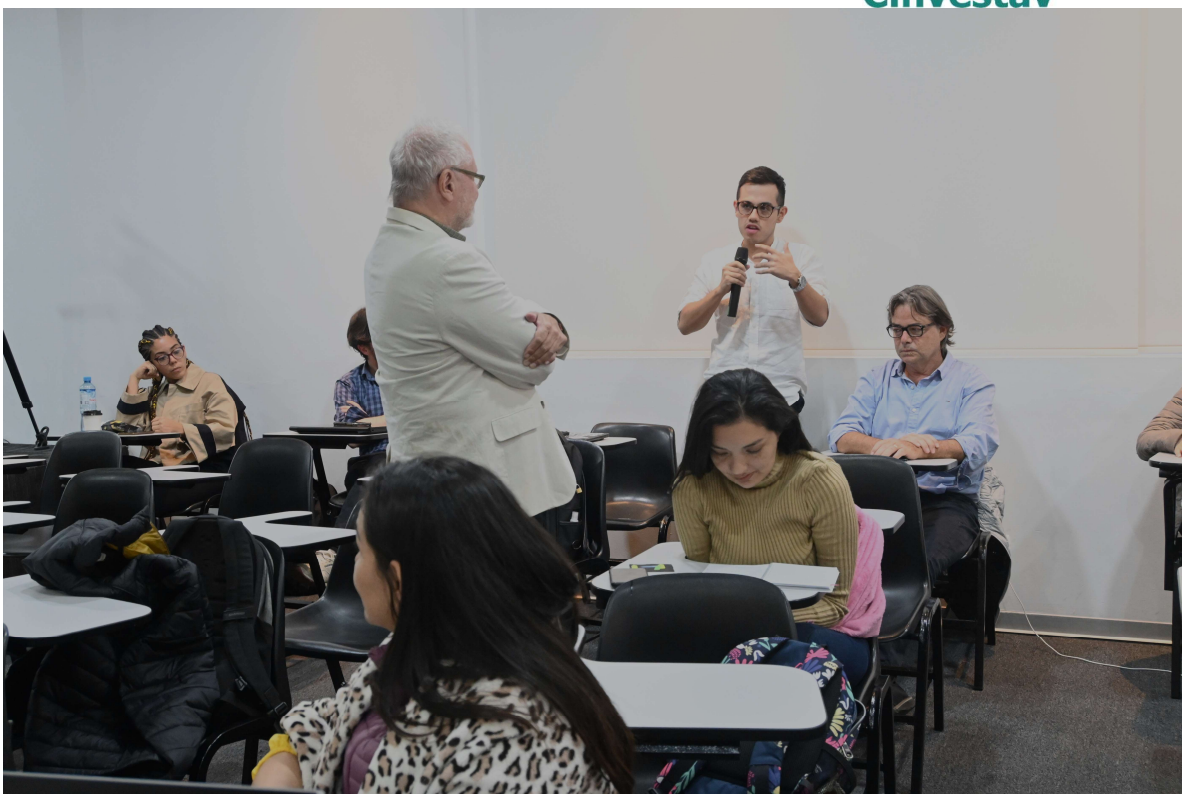

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