

Brazilian Ministry of Health to intensify assistance to Epilepsy in 2013

The national government will start to put into practice instructions of the Pan-American Plan of Action on the disease.

By Patrícia Tambourgi, São Paulo

The care of patients with epilepsy in Brazil is bound to have progress in the year of 2013. The discussion on how to improve attention of people with this disease in primary, secondary and tertiary care started in a meeting held in the Ministry of Health, in Brasilia, December 19th.

One advancement will be the distribution of a publication based on the mhGAP Manual of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the primary care net. The text is currently being translated into Portuguese and adapted to the country's reality by the neurologist of UNICAMP, Li Li Min.

In addition, the Ministry of Health itself will develop a Booklet of Primary Care Attention to distribute to physicians about care of epilepsy, headache and dizziness. Over 50 thousand booklets will be produced.

The Ministry of Health will also start to develop a website (www.autocuidado.saude.gov.br) with instruction to the public in general on how to deal with and take care of patients with epilepsy. Specific videos about the disease will be produced and there will be an area for interaction with patients who desire to tell their story of their fight against epilepsy.

The last decision has to do with mapping the situation of epilepsy in Brazil. The aim is to evaluate the quality of attention and diagnose of the disease in primary, secondary and tertiary cares.

These actions are in accordance with the Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsy in the Americas, elaborated by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), with the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE). Their partnership was signed in November 2012 in Quito, Ecuador.

According the Plan of Action, American countries have four main objectives to achieve: the establishment national program for epilepsy; development of health network for patients with the disease, mainly primary health care; education and sensitization of the population, in order to reduce prejudice and stigma with which people with epilepsy cope; and the strengthening of capacity to produce, assess and use information about the disease. To sum up, it aims to render epilepsy a visible and priority disease in the health care agenda of all American countries.

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological diseases in the world. According PAHO, over 70 million people around the globe have epilepsy, 6 million only in the Americas.

The actions discussed in the meeting in Brasilia shall be implemented in the first semestre of 2013. The first results will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Brazilian Federation for Epilepsy, in March 21st 2013.



Meeting at Ministry of Health on December 21st, 2012. From left to right: Sabrina da Silva Mendes (Technical consultant Middle and High Complexity of Ministry of Health); Li Li Min (Professor of UNICAMP, member of executive committee of Plan of Action on Epilepsy of PAHO-ILAE-IBE); Patrícia Sampaio Chueiri (Coordinator of Technical Area of Basic Care of Ministry of Health); José Eduardo Fogolin Passos (Coordinator of Middle and High Complexity of Ministry of Health); Sheila Cristina Ouriques Martins (Technical consultant Middle and High Complexity of Ministry of Health)