

Mario Arturo Alonso Vanegas

All those who know me, know well that I am not a political animal. I am an academic animal of strict rigor. I am a neurosurgeon who has specialized in Epilepsy and Functional Neurosurgery. I have been working at the National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery (NINN) in Mexico City since my return to my home country in 1999. It has been my life's work to apply the skills, knowledge and experience acquired in training at the Montreal Neurological Institute, into a working surgical program within the structural, knowledge and economic limitations of the NINN. Since 2005 I started a postgraduate fellowship program in epilepsy surgery at the institute, certified by our highest ranked university (UNAM), which has been instrumental in training young neurosurgeons willing to develop similar surgical programs. I am a member of the two most prestigious academic societies in México, the National Academy of Medicine and the Mexican Academy of Surgery. I have collaborated with the Latin-American Commission of Latin American Affairs in the surgical commission during the presidencies of Manuel Campos Puebla from Chile and Marco Tulio Medina. I have also been a member of the commission on surgical therapies of the ILAE and have been invited as a repeat member in this commission.

Currently I am president of the Mexican Chapter of the ILAE, and in this capacity I collaborated with ILAE and IBE in planning the successful 9th LACE in Cancún (August 2016). I have been co-chair of the Spanish Symposium at the Annual Meeting of the American Epilepsy Society for the last two years and have been very interested in creating adequate learning opportunities for our Spanish speaking countries. I believe that in our Latin American region there are many so called experts who are rather fans of epilepsy, protagonists with political interests, and vestiges of an archaic system of outdated rules. There are however few real experts with the capacity to design proactive programs and establish guidelines with a genuine interest in improving the impact of epilepsy knowledge and research for the true benefit of the marginalized patient. It is patients who should be benefited by our commitment to a social and educational responsibility. We can only achieve a truly efficient approach to epilepsy care, prevention and education by raising awareness and coordinated actions locally with a global network enriched perspective. If we are to use a slogan for our ideas and purposes it should be to communicate and educate efficiently and treat decisively.