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The Autoinmune Encephalitis Registry in Latin American countries: The REAL LABIC Project

Registro de Encefalitis Autoinmune en países de Latinoamérica: proyecto REAL LABIC

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Dear Editor,

Autoimmune encephalitis is a disease of significant clinical relevance and has been identified as one of the primary causes of admission for encephalitis of non-infectious etiology (1). It encompasses a broad spectrum of immunological disorders that affect the central nervous system. Given its considerable clinical diversity, Graus et al. (2) postulated a clinical approach to establish diagnostic criteria and levels of confirmation in this entity, aiming to initiate prompt immunotherapy, which is associated with a better functional prognosis in these patients.

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Due to the significant neurological compromise of these patients and the occurrence of complications such as status epilepticus, dysautonomia and systemic in-hospital issues, these patients should be promptly admitted to neurocritical care units and evaluated by a multidisciplinary team (3).

In Latin America, multiple barriers have been described in the diagnosis and management of patients with autoimmune encephalitis, potentially resulting in underreporting of this condition. The management of this pathology is complex due to the broad differential diagnosis that must be ruled out, the therapeutic options available and the conditions of the health system existing in each country in our region (4).

THE REAL LABIC PROJECT

Latin America Brain Injury Consortium (LABIC) is a nonprofit entity founded in 2003 in Argentina by Latin-American professionals, representing 19 countries with a special interest and dedication to Neurointensive care. The main objective of the consortium is to conduct research and educational activities involving the training of professionals in the field of neurocritical care, thus developing and disseminating recommendations and guidelines for the management of different acute brain diseases, according to the resources, possibilities, and limitations of each region. LABIC encourages cooperation with other brain injury consortia, foundations, associations, and scientific associations around the world. The LABIC Foundational letter is available at www.labic.la.

The Autoimmune Encephalitis Registry in Latin American countries (REAL LABIC Project) is a LABIC initiative, officially announced on April 27, 2023, and with a university research registry (050-CEI-EPM-UCV-2023), which was born out of the need to understand different aspects of autoimmune encephalitis, especially its epidemiology, clinical evolution and management protocols in our region of Latin America.

Objectives

1. To describe the strengths and weaknesses in the diagnosis, treatment, follow-up and continued medical education in autoimmune encephalitis in the Latin American region.
2. To develop a Latin American registry of autoimmune encephalitis cases that allows us to understand the clinical outcomes of this disease and its associated factors.
3. To integrate all specialties that are directly or indirectly linked to this disease, including academic meetings and training activities in this entity.
4. To invite the Latin American scientific community involved in the care of patients with autoimmune encephalitis to propose collaborative multicenter research initiatives and management consensus in our region.

Members

The REAL LABIC Project consists of a multidisciplinary team including adult intensivists, pediatric intensivists, neurointensivists, neurologists, pediatricians, neuropediatricians, internal medicine specialists, psychiatrists, rehabilitation speciliasts, among others. These members are experts from various Latin American countries who have experience in managing autoimmune encephalitis. Currently, the project has 108 members from 17 Latin American countries (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Geographical distribution of the REAL LABIC Projet collaborators in Latin American countries.

Activities

Members of scientific societies across different Latin American countries have been engaged in promoting the project. Several meetings have been conducted, and planning for five multicenter research studies has been initiated. The retrospective phase of the REAL LABIC Project is currently underway, including data analysis.

CONCLUSION

Promoting regional initiatives in Latin America is crucial for gaining a better understanding of the landscape of autoimmune encephalitis. These initiatives should involve the entire multidisciplinary team responsible for managing the condition. The REAL LABIC Project presents an opportunity to achieve the fundamental goal of improving the care provided to patients with autoimmune encephalitis in Latin America.

Author contribution:
MAV, DAG: conceptualization, data curation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing.
JAR, SRN, MGA, DM, MMAC, CJ: data curation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing.

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