



## Historical aspects of the foundation of the Latin American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery

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Dear Editor:

In 1998, during the XXVIII Congress of the Latin American Federation of Societies of Neurosurgery (CLAN) held in Santiago de Chile, a meeting took place between neurosurgeons dedicated to pediatrics, which laid the foundations for the creation of a Latin American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery. The main objective of this society was to develop international programs and promote cooperation to improve and consolidate pediatric neurosurgery as subspecialty in our continent. This initiative received support from the International Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery (ISPN) and the President of Latin American Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (FLANC), Prof. Dr. Leo Ditzel (Brazil). Those present at this first meeting, in order to establish which steps should be taken next, were Dr. Graciela Zuccaro (Argentina), Dr. Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo (Chile), Dr. Julio Brossard (Cuba), Dr. Fernando Rueda Franco (Mexico), Dr. Guzman (Venezuela), and Dr. Francisco M Salomão (Brazil) [1–4].

Two years later, in June 2000, once again during the CLAN (XXIX), hosted in Fortaleza (Brazil), the group of pediatric neurosurgeons founded the Pediatric Chapter of the Federation. An executive committee was elected for the purpose of drafting the Chapter's regulations and organizing the next meeting, scheduled for April 2001, in Cordoba (Argentina). Those serving on this committee were Dr. Carlos Dabdoud Arrien (Bolivia), Edgar Morales Landeo (Perú), Graciela Noemi Zuccaro (Argentina), Pedro Aros (Chile), and Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo (Chile) [1–4].

The creation of a pediatric neurosurgery society in Latin America moved slowly. From the beginning, there were many controversies involved in the political repercussions from the creation of a new neurosurgical society. What position would

FLANC adopt on this issue? Faced with possible conflicts, the most appropriate path for this political moment was to consolidate a pediatric chapter within FLANC itself.

On April 7, 2001, during the II meeting of Pediatric Neurosurgery of FLANC, coordinated by Dr. Julio Cesar Suarez (president of the Argentine Society of Neurosurgery), in the city of Cordoba, the first executive board of the Pediatric Chapter of FLANC was elected, and was formed with Dr. Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo as president, Dr. Graciela Noemi Zuccaro as vice president, and Dr. Artur Henrique Galvão Bruno Da Cunha as general secretary. The mandate was to last until October 2002. Those present at this meeting were Dr. Maurice Choux (secretary of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies—WFNS), Dr. Harold ReKate (president of ISPN), Dr. Hector Giocoli (vice president of FLANC), Dr. Christian Sainte-Rose (continuing education course director of ISPN), Dr. Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo (vice president of the Chilean Pediatric Neurosurgery Society), and Dr. Artur HGB Da Cunha (president of the Brazilian Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery). Prof. Fernando Rueda Franco (Mexico) was asked to draw up a draft statute for the Chapter, which would be presented and discussed at the next CLAN in October 2002 in Lima, Peru. Another important decision was also made: the Pediatric Chapter would be responsible for organizing the scientific programming of the Raul Carrea Symposium, which took place each 2 years within CLAN's scientific program [1, 3, 5].

The first working meeting of the executive board was held on August 11, 2001, in Santiago, Chile. Priority actions were defined, such as organizing a register of members of the Chapter, organizing the Raul Carrea Symposium for the next CLAN in Lima, and initiating a program of continuing education courses. After telephone contact with Dr. Carlos Dabdoud Arrien, it was decided that the first continuing education course of the Chapter would be held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in March 2002.

On March 21, 2002, at the Hospital Japonés, in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia's economic capital, our

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program of continuing education courses was launched. The I International Course of Continuing Education in Pediatric Neurosurgery was coordinated by Dr. Carlos Dabdoub, with 54 participants from a number of different countries. The course faculty was made up of Dr. Artur da Cunha and Dr. Francisco Salomão from Brazil; Dr. Arturo Zuleta, Dr. Eugenio Poch, Dr. Pedro Aros, and Dr. Sergio Valenzuela from Chile; Dr. Graciela Zuccaro and Dr. Hugo Pomata from Argentina; and Prof. Fernando Rueda Franco from Mexico, who ended the course with “a captivating lecture on ethics in pediatric neurosurgery” [6, 7].

On October 29, 2002, during the XXX CLAN hosted in Lima—Peru, the Pediatric Chapter coordinated the Raul Carrea Symposium with the participation of neurosurgeons from several countries, and held its first Biannual Assembly. During this Assembly, the founding of the Latin American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery was once again discussed, which would act as the Pediatric Chapter of FLANC. The proposed statute of the future Society, drawn up by Dr. Fernando Rueda Franco, was provisionally approved, but after lengthy discussion, the decision was once again postponed until the next CLAN scheduled for 2004 in Panama. The Assembly decided that the II International Education Course was to take place in Santiago de Cuba City, during the first semester of 2003. The new executive board of the Chapter for the 2003–2004 biennium was elected: Dr. Artur Henrique Galvao Bruno Da Cunha (Brazil)—president, Dr. Carlos Dabdoub Arrien (Bolivia)—vice president, Dr. Tenoch Herrada Pineda (Mexico)—general secretary, and Dr. Benicio Oton de Lima (Brasil)—treasurer. A Deliberative Council was also elected, comprising Dr. Sergio Valenzuela Abaslo (Chile), Dr. Graciela Noemi Zuccaro (Argentina), and Prof. Fernando Rueda Franco (Mexico). Another important decision of the Assembly was that the Vice President would be the president-elect for the following administration. Thus, Dr. Carlos Dabdoub Arrien was elected in advance for the 2005–2006 biennium. Finally, Dr. Mario Calvit was assigned to coordinate the next Raul Carrea Symposium scheduled for the CLAN of Panama.

During the Assembly held in Lima, it became more evident that the Society was forming. The administrative structure of the Pediatric Chapter had undergone very important changes. A treasurer and a deliberative council were created, and the Vice President occupied the position of president-elect.

The continuing education program went on to the II Course, held in Santiago de Cuba on March 13 and 14, 2003 [8]; the III Course in Montevideo (Uruguay) on November 17–19, 2003 [9]; the IV Course in Lima (Peru) on December 12 and 13, 2003; the V Course in Villa-Hermosa (Mexico) on May 27 and 28, 2004; and the VI Course was held in Guayaquil (Ecuador) between September 8 and 11, 2004, followed by several other courses held in different Latin American countries; the most recent being in Santarem

(Brazil) in July 2017 and Mexico City in March 2018. The next course is being scheduled for the city of Puerto Montt, Chile, between September 6 and 8, 2018.

On November 20, 2003, in Buenos Aires (Argentina), the executive committee of the Latin American Federation of Neurosurgery Societies, presided over by Dr. Hector Giocoli, approved changes in the FLANC statutes, and officially recognized the existence of the Pediatric Chapter. It seemed that official recognition as a FLANC Chapter did not inhibit the course of being held in an independent Society. The idea of a movement that would culminate in the creation of a Latin American Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery was officially communicated to Dr. Hector Giocoli through a letter dated November 20, 2003. This letter was part of a report presented during this meeting of the FLANC executive committee. In this same report, Dr. Carlos Dabdoub Arrien stated that one of the main objectives of the Chapter would be to organize the first Latin American Congress of Pediatric Neurosurgery [1]. The Chapter continued to carry out many activities with autonomy and efficiency.

On October 27, 2004, during the XXXI CLAN, in the Chiriqui room of the Hotel Caesar Park, in Panama City, the Biennial assembly of the Pediatric Neurosurgery Chapter was held. The new executive board was made up of Dr. Carlos Dabdoub Arrien (Bolivia)—president, Dr. Graciela Noemi Zuccaro (Argentina)—vice president and president-elect, Dr. Mario Calvit (Panama)—general secretary, and Dr. Ricardo Zopfi (Peru)—treasurer. Those serving on the Advisory Board were Prof. Fernando Rueda Franco (Mexico), Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo (Chile), and Artur HGB Da Cunha (Brazil). Among the decisions taken at this Assembly was to publish a book, written in Portuguese and Spanish entitled “NEUROCIRURGIA INFANTIL LATINOAMERICANA” (Pediatric Neurosurgery in Latin America). The Editors-in-Chief were Dr. Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo and Dr. Arturo Zuleta Ferreira, both Chileans. The Associate Editors, and responsible for the different chapters, were Dr. Artur HGB Da Cunha (Brazil), Dr. Carlos Dabdoub Arrien (Bolivia), Dr. Francisco Goyenechea (Cuba), Dr. Graciela Zuccaro (Argentina), Dr. Hugo Blas Pomata (Argentina), and Dr. Mario Calvit (Panama).

Pediatric neurosurgery in Latin America evolved, from an institutional aspect, and from April 26 to 29, 2006, again with the pioneering of the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the I Latin American Congress of Pediatric Neurosurgery (CLANPED) was held. A daring, joyous initiative by Dr. Carlos Dabdoub Arrien and Dr. Ramiro Villavicencio. Dr. Marco Molina, FLANC President, presided over the opening ceremony of the Congress. We now have our own Congress, independent of FLANC but, we continue as Chapter [7]. The first extraordinary assembly of the Pediatric Chapter was held, and the central discussion was to decide on the locations for the next continuing education courses, XXXII CLAN in Buenos Aires

and the next CLANPED. The City of Acapulco (Mexico) was elected to host the II CLANPED, presided by Dr. Tenoch Herrada Pineda.

We arrived at the XXXII CLAN, held in October 21–26, 2006, in the city of Buenos Aires. During the ordinary general assembly of the Pediatric Chapter the book *Neurocirurgia Infantil Latinoamericana—Tomo I* was released. The book was published by Edições Bagaço, in Recife (Brazil), 778 pages, with a circulation of 1000 copies, with the sponsorship of several Brazilian companies [10]. Those taking up office on the executive board 2006–2008 were Dr. Graciela Noemi Zuccaro—president (Argentina), who appointed Dr. Santiago Portillo Medina (Argentina) as general secretary and Dr. Carlos Umberto Pereira (Brazil) as treasurer. Completing the executive board was the elected vice president, Dr. Jose Francisco M Salomao (Brazil).

Between September 27 and 29, 2007, with the support of the Mexican Society of Neurosurgery the II CLANPED was held in Acapulco [11]. During the general extraordinary assembly of the Chapter, the creation of the Latin American Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery was once again a topic of discussion, but once again the decision was postponed, with the argument that there was still a perceived need to “mature the process.” It was decided that the CLANPED would be held biannually, in odd years. An important decision was taken to create a web page ([www.flancpediatria.org](http://www.flancpediatria.org)) for the Pediatric Chapter, whose coordinator would be Dr. Santiago Portillo Medina. Recife, the capital of the Brazilian northeastern state of Pernambuco, was chosen to host the III CLANPED in 2009.

In October 2008, during the XXXIII CLAN, in Bogota (Colombia) the new executive board of the Pediatric Chapter took office, for the period 2008–2010, Dr. Jose Francisco M Salomao (Brazil)—president, Dr. Benicio Oton de Lima (Brazil)—general secretary, Dr. Carlos Umberto Pereira (Brazil)—treasurer, and Dr. Santiago Portillo Medina (Argentina)—editor of the web page. Dr. Tenoch Herrada Pineda (Mexico) was elected vice president.

On November 25–28, 2009, with the support of the Brazilian Society of Neurosurgery, the Brazilian Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery and the Pernambuco Society of Neurosurgery, the city of Recife, under the coordination of Dr. Artur HGB Da Cunha, hosted the III CLANPED. During the event, an extraordinary assembly and several administrative meetings were held, which decided, among other things, that the IV CLANPED would be held in Chile, under the presidency of Dr. Sergio Valenzuela, and that all efforts would be made to launch the II Volume of “*Neurocirurgia Infantil Latinoamericana*,” during the CLAN in El Salvador in October 2010.

As with Tomo I, the Tomo II left Recife, in a joint effort, editors, collaborators, sponsors, including the support of the Pernambucan Society of Neurosurgery. Tomo II was a

continuation of I, which was published in 2006. Its publication, however, began a reformulation process of the scientific documentation process of the Pediatric Neurosurgery Chapter, which was to be one of the important topics discussed during the CLAN of El Salvador.

In October 2010, the XXXIV CLAN arrived in Salinitas, El Salvador. As planned, during the Ordinary General Assembly, there was an official presentation of the II Volume of the book “*Neurocirurgia Infantil Latinoamericana*”, Editora Livros Rapido—Elogica, Recife (Brazil), 617 pages [3]. The new executive board of the Chapter was formed, with Dr. Tenoch Herrada Pineda (Mexico)—president, and Dr. Mario Rodrigues Murilo (Mexico)—general secretary. Dr. Guzman Aranda Gonzalez (Panama) was elected vice president [11].

Between October 3 and 6, 2011, the IV CLANPED was held in the city of San Pedro de Atacama, in the middle of the Atacama Desert, Chile. The Congress president was Dr. Sergio Valenzuela. During the Extraordinary General Assembly, it was decided to create a foundation to manage the financial resources of the Chapter, generated through the sale of the books and what remained from the Congresses. The directors of the Chapter and members of the Consultative Council went to a registry office in Sao Pedro de Atacama to provide the necessary documents in order to open a bank account in Panama. Dr. Guzman Aranda was responsible for arranging the foundation and opening the account.

Unfortunately, we later discovered that Panamanian law made many other demands, and it was not possible to move forward with the foundation and open the bank account.

The XXXV CLAN was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), October 2012. During the Ordinary General Assembly, the creation of a society was again discussed, considering the failure to create a foundation. However, once again no consensus was reached, and once again it was decided to discuss the project in the future. On the new executive board were Dr. Guzman Aranda Gonzalez (Panama)—president, Dr. Javier Gonzalez Ramos (Argentina)—general secretary, and Dr. Ricardo Auad (Argentina)—treasurer. As was customary, the Vice President was elected—Dr. Santiago Portillo Medina (Argentina). It was decided to hold the V CLANPED in the city of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, under the presidency of Dr. Leonardo Domingues de la Ossa.

From November 20 to 23, 2013, with the support of the Colombian Association of Neurosurgery, Cartagena de Indias, one of the most beautiful historic Colombian cities was the venue for the V CLANPED. Among the decisions taken by the Extraordinary General Assembly was that the VI CLANPED would be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the chairmanship of Dr. Graciela Zuccaro.

In October 2014, during the XXXVI CLAN held in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, the Ordinary General Assembly was opened by the new executive board: Dr. Santiago Portillo Medina (Argentina)—president, with Dr. Javier



Gonzalez Ramos (Argentina), and Dr. Kemel Ghotme (Colombia)—treasurer. The new logo of the Pediatric Chapter was presented (Fig. 1). As there was a lack of quorum to elect the Vice President of the Chapter, an Extraordinary General Assembly was convened during the Annual Congress of the International Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery (ISPN), scheduled for Rio de Janeiro from November 9 to 14, 2014. At the aforementioned Extraordinary General Meeting held in November 2014, in Rio de Janeiro, Dr. Fernando Chico Ponce de Leon was elected vice chairman of the FLANC Pediatric Chapter.

From September 17 to 19, 2015, with the support of FLANC, the Argentine Association of Neurosurgery, and the Argentine Society of Pediatrics, the Pediatric Chapter of FLANC held the VI CLANPED. This magnificent Congress took place at the traditional, historic Alvear Palace Hotel in Buenos Aires. The Scientific Commission under the leadership of Dr. Graciela Zuccaro brought Dr. Tanadori Tomita (USA), Dr. Jeffrey Wisoff (USA), and Dr. Giuseppe Cinalli (Italy) as guest speakers. Prof. Fernando Rueda Franco (Mexico) was the guest of honor at the Congress. The city of Quito, Ecuador, was elected for the VII CLANPED, under the presidency of Dr. Rodolfo Bernal Carrillo. Important decisions were taken during the Extraordinary General

Assembly for the founding of the Society. The Assemblies held during the CLANPED would become Ordinary and the election of the executive board would no longer take place during the CLAN, but during the CLANPED.

The XXXVII CLAN was held between October 30 and November 3, 2016, in the Mexican city of Cancun. During the Assembly of the Pediatric Chapter, the decision taken in Buenos Aires was ratified; and a new executive board was not elected. The Board chaired by Dr. Santiago Portillo Medina remained in office until the scheduled CLANPED in Quito the following year.

Between June 1 and 3, 2017, the beautiful, historic Ecuadorian capital received the VII CLANPED. Among the speakers were representatives from almost all Latin American countries as well as colleagues from the USA and Spain. On June 2, 2017, one Friday night, the Ordinary General Assembly of the Chapter was held, during which the new executive board took office: Dr. Fernando Chico Ponce de Leon (Mexico)—president, Antonio Garcia Mendez (Mexico)—treasurer, and Dr. Kemel Ghotme (Colombia)—treasurer assistant; remaining as general secretary was Dr. Javier Gonzalez Ramos (Argentina). Dr. Leonardo Dominguez de la Ossa (Colombia) was elected vice president. The city of San Jose, Capital of Costa Rica was elected to host the VIII CLANPED in May 2019 under the presidency of Dr. Adrian Cacerez.

After closing the Annual General Assembly of the FLANC Pediatric Chapter, all those present were asked to remain behind in the Hilton Colon Hotel's Event Room and the Founding Assembly of the Latin American Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery was initiated. After intense debate, on Friday June 2, 2017, the Society was finally founded. It was decided that the first executive board of the Latin American Society would be the same as that newly elected to the FLANC Pediatric Chapter. A Commission to draw up the statutes of the Society was formed, and included Dr. Adrian Cacerez, Dr. Artur HGB Da Cunha, Carlos Dabdoub Arrien, and Sergio Valenzuela Abasolo, charged with the mission of presenting the statute proposals at the next meeting, which will be held during the XXXVIII CLAN, in November 2018, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.

It was proposed that the next CLANPED be the official Congress of the newly created Society, and the pediatric sessions of the CLAN will be held by the Pediatric Chapter of FLANC.

After almost 20 years, this group of self-abnegating pediatric neurosurgeons finally founded a Latin American Society, thereby following the same path of other continental societies. Our beginnings have been big, with over 400 members, seven congresses, and more than 20 continuing education courses in different



**Fig. 1** Images of VII CLANPED and the assembly of the Foundation of the Latin American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery

countries. The challenge now is to set up the infrastructure, approve the Statutes and, choose a permanent headquarters. We will move on.

### Compliance with ethical standards

**Conflict of interest** The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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