

## Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Report

### STSM details

**Title**                      **Creating basis for prevention of work-related contact dermatitis in Argentina**

**Participant**              Dr. Jose Hernán Alfonso  
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**Host / Location**        Dr. Elena Beatriz Kvitko  
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Buenos Aires, Argentina.



**Period**                    2 – 21 August 2015

### Aim of the STSM

The objectives of this STSM were to:

1. disseminate information about the COST Action TD1206 “StanDerm” among authorities, members of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology and dermatologists of Buenos Aires
2. get insight about the management of work-related skin diseases in Argentina
3. collect clinical data on work-related contact dermatitis to perform a descriptive, clinic-based study with comprising the diagnosed cases of work-related contact dermatitis for the period 2010-2014 (retrospective data) in both public and private centres of Buenos Aires
4. plan future actions aimed to increase the relevance of the prevention of work-related skin diseases in Argentina

## Work carried out during the STSM

Little is known about the occurrence of work-related skin diseases in Argentina and South America since official statistics on work-related skin diseases are not available.

Based on previous and current clinical practice the social burden of work-related skin conditions seems to be considerable, mainly due to at a considerable part of the population works in the informal labor market with precarious conditions, and lack of access to protective equipment.

In addition, many of the workers suffering of work-related skin diseases are obliged to leave their jobs because of the skin condition's severity.

**Figure 1:** Size of Argentina compared to some selected countries from Scandinavia, Europe and Asia.



Specialization into occupational medicine in Argentina consist of only one-year postgraduate course where the main focus relies on sick-leave follow-up, while prevention is not prioritized. Few legal regulations providing the background for prevention at workplaces, such as elimination or substitution of harmful exposures, or enforcement of technical and organizational measures are available. Norway and other Scandinavian countries own a worldwide leading positions regarding preventive occupational medicine.

In Argentina, there is a paucity of public and private funding for research into occupational dermatology. The research activities are often maintained by voluntary work that clinicians perform during their spare time, e.g. non-salaried work in the public university hospitals. For instance, this is the case for the two dermatologists with expertise in contact dermatitis working at the Hospital de Clinicas.

The Argentinean Society of Dermatology, with approximately 3000 members, is the

dermatological society with most members in all Latin-American. The Research Group on Contact Dermatitis of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology has been part of the **COST Action TD1206 Development and Implementation of European Standards on Prevention of Occupational Skin Diseases (StanDerm)** since August 2014. This Society performs several scientific activities and preventive campaigns that may contribute to increase the relevance of preventing work-related skin diseases in Argentina.

Therefore, the main goal of this STSM was to facilitate scientific networking with Argentina, and disseminate information about StanDerm and prevention of work-related skin diseases as well as plan future preventive activities.

### Main results obtained

**Objective 1:** *To disseminate information about the COST Action TD1206 StanDerm among authorities and members of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology, and dermatologists of Buenos Aires.*

The COST Action TD1206 StanDerm was presented to:

- Authorities of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology
- Department of Dermatology of the Hospital Universitario de Clinicas, Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires
- Hospital Municipal JM Penna



**Picture 1:** *Presenting STANDERM to the current president of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology Dra. Mirtha Fontino (from right to left: Dra. Marta La Forgia, Dra. Mirtha Fontino, Dr. Jose Hernán Alfonso and Dra. Elena Kvitko)*



**Picture 2:** Planning future activities with the leader of the scientific group of Contact Dermatitis Dra. Marta La Forgia



**Picture 3:** After the presentation of STANDERM to the Department of Dermatology of the Hospital Municipal JM Penna

**Objective 2:** To get insight about the management of work-related skin diseases in Argentina.

### Management of work-related skin diseases

The Department of Dermatology of the Hospital de Clinicas gives attention to between 35 and 40 thousands patients yearly. Through observation in the out-patients clinic of contact dermatitis and skin cancer I got insight not only about clinical features of OSD, but also into how patients with possible work-related dermatoses are managed in this hospital.



**Picture 4:** Patch testing kit in the Department of Dermatology Hospital de Clinicas Jose de San Martín



**Picture 6:** Patient with probable cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma in the foot after a heat injury



**Picture 7:** Seminar for the Department of Dermatology Hospital de Clinicas Jose de San Martín

The participation of Argentina in StanDerm may contribute to develop a guideline for the management of patients with potential work-related skin diseases.

**Objective 3:** *To collect clinical data on work-related contact dermatitis to perform a descriptive, clinic-based study with comprising the diagnosed cases of work-related contact dermatitis for the period 2010-2014 (retrospective data) in both public and private centers of Buenos Aires*

Three hundred eighty-six cases with work-related skin diseases for the period 2010-2014 were collected. This data will be used for a retrospective study that will contribute to identify the commonest professions, and allergens related to work-related contact dermatitis. In general, the results of this project will help us to identify risk professions that may be target for future preventive actions.

**Objective 4:** *To plan future actions aimed at increasing the relevance of the prevention of work-related skin diseases in Argentina.*

A seminar about prevention of work-related skin diseases in 2016 is being planned at the moment. See also point 3 for future plans.

## Planned activities and foreseen publications resulting from the STSM

### Oral presentations / poster:

South- America: International conferences arranged by the Society of Dermatology of Argentina and the College of Dermatology of Ibero America. Both Congresses will take place in 2016.

Europe: European Society of Cutaneous Allergy and Contact Dermatitis (2016) which will take place in the United Kingdom in 2016.

### Papers:

#### South- America (publications in Spanish):

As many health professionals in Latino America only read publications in Spanish we plan to send publications to one of the following journals:

- ✓ "Dermatologia Argentina" (journal of The Argentinean Society of Dermatology). Available: <http://www.dermatolarg.org.ar/>  
This Journal is well renowned by dermatologists in South America.
- ✓ "Revista Salud de los Trabajadores". Available:  
<http://www.latindex.unam.mx/buscador/ficRev.html?folio=10069&opcion=1>
- ✓ "Revista Medicina y Seguridad del Trabajo". Available:  
[http://www.paho.org/isl/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4:revista-de-medicina-y-seguridad-del-trabajo&Itemid=29](http://www.paho.org/isl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4:revista-de-medicina-y-seguridad-del-trabajo&Itemid=29)

#### Europe:

- ✓ We would like to send a manuscript regarding the retrospective study for consideration of publication in the peer-reviewed international journal Contact Dermatitis
- ✓ Results of this STSM will be also reported in the Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association "Ramazzini"

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