

Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Report

STSM details

Title Work-related skin diseases in Argentina



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Background and purpose of the STSM

This STSM is a continuation of the previous STSM carried out by Jose Hernán Alfonso to learn more in-depth about the management of work-related skin diseases in Argentina, to continue collecting data on work-related contact dermatitis, and to exchange with local dermatologists and researchers on different successful prevention measures practices in Europe. Finally, to initiate actions to tackle the challenges of occupational dermatoses and how to implement them in Argentina.

Summary of activities performed

In Argentina, no public and private funding for research into occupational dermatology is available. 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 six dermatologists with expertise in occupational contact dermatitis in Buenos Aires (Dra. Alicia Cannavo, Dra. Marta P. La Forgia, Dra. Elena Kvitko,

Dra. Gabriela Bravo, Dra. Lucrecia Infante) and La Plata (Dr. Juan Pedro Russo). 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 Standard 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.

Some of the challenges to be tackled in order to prevent work-related skin diseases in Argentina, mainly contact dermatitis and skin cancer, include:

- Official recognition of patch testing as a diagnostic procedure: patch tests are now not officially recognised as a necessary diagnostic instrument.
- Education of the workers on prevention and access to personal protective measures: many employers do not provide workers with adequate personal protective measures before worker develop skin problems.
- The contribution of occupational solar UV exposure in the overall risk of skin cancer is not acknowledged.



Interdisciplinary seminar about how to tackle the challenges in prevention of work-related skin diseases in Argentina.

*From left to right:
Prof. An Goossens (Belgium),
Dr. José Hernán Alfonso (Norway),
Dr. Alicia Cannavo (Argentina)*

To the authorities of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology and Colegio Ibero-latinoamericano de Dermatología (Ibero-Latinoamerican College of Dermatology), the advances on the European standards on prevention on work-related skin diseases as well as on the current efforts to achieve more focus on prevention of occupational skin cancer in Europe. The Research Group on Contact Dermatitis from the Argentinean Society of Dermatology has recently updated their own consensus for the clinical management of contact dermatitis. This consensus does not focus on prevention; however, the next update will include some of the standards developed by StanDerm where prevention of work-related

contact dermatitis and skin cancer is highly prioritized.

We discussed which allergens should be included in the standard battery for South-America prepared by Chemotechnique. For instance, it includes three different markers for allergy to topical corticosteroids whereof only one of them is necessary. Furthermore, we clarified on how to interpret reactivity to Palladium in the presence of nickel allergy.

Of particular interest were presentations made by the Research Group on Contact Dermatitis from the Argentinean Society of Dermatology on results gained from work-related contact dermatitis projects initiated after the inclusion of Argentina in StanDerm.

Activities to tackle the main challenges described above were planned in cooperation with the Group on Contact Dermatitis of the Argentinean Society of Dermatology.

This STSM helped me to acquire knowledge on the diagnostics paths used in Argentina to diagnose an occupational skin disease, and about the more prevalent allergens. Moreover, it was an inspiration to observe the commitment of a scientific society such as the Argentinean Society of Dermatology in the prevention of work-related skin diseases.

Main results obtained

Overall, this STSM was an excellent opportunity to exchange amongst experts from Argentina, South America and Europe on the various prevention and diagnostic approaches applied to improve workers' risks of developing a work-related skin disease and to bring forward joint research activities. Further cooperation and future common publications are warranted.

An Goossens

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