

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Certification in sleep medicine in Colombia

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As Vizcarra-Escobar et al¹ mentions in their recent article, sleep medicine in Latin America has significantly evolved in recent years, which is reflected not only in the growing organization of scientific societies, in academic activity, but also in scientific production.

Due to the lack of recognition as a medical specialty in some countries and the limited availability of training programs, there is a need to standardize the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders, with a multidisciplinary approach involving specialists in the field of pneumology, neurology, psychiatry, otolaryngology, and pediatrics.

For this reason, the Colombian Association of Sleep Medicine (ACMES), created in 1998, decided to initiate a certification process in sleep medicine. Initially, agreements were made with the different societies (Colombian Association of Pneumology and Chest Surgery, Colombian Association of Neurology, Colombian Association of Otolaryngology, Colombian Association of Pediatric Pneumology, Colombian Association of Child Neurology, Colombian Association of Psychiatry) and, in turn, with the Spanish Sleep Society which started their accreditation process in 2013 and has accredited 256 specialist doctors.²

Three members of ACMES (KP, EDM, MABZ) attended the accreditation course in Spain and were certified; and in 2017, the process was started in Colombia following the Spanish model, which we describe below.

Applicants must have a related specialty, experience in sleep medicine, training certification (usually conducted outside Colombia), and research experience. If they obtain the required credits for admission, then they receive a selected bibliography for study and must attend a course for 3 days (12 hours/day), which develops topics of physiology and pharmacology (12%), evaluation (20%), sleep-related respiratory diseases (30%), sleep-related neurological and psychiatric diseases (30%), sleep in pediatrics (5%), and sleep in other medical disorder (3%), and sleep in pediatrics (5%), with 30-minute lectures on each topic, followed by discussion with experts and peers.

On the fourth day a test is given, consisting of 70 single best-answer multiple-choice questions and a practical examination,

with a passing score of at least 70 points. The course teachers are experts from Colombia, Spain (JDC, FJP), and Argentina.

In 2017, 20 of 42 applications were selected, of which 17 were approved; in 2019, 20 out of 20 were selected, with 17 approved. Of the 34 of those certified are pneumologists (32%), otorhinolaryngologists (26%), neurologists (14%), pediatricians (9%), psychiatrists (6%), and pediatric pneumologists (6%).

This has been hard work, which also has included the certification of sleep technicians (32 have been certified,) and a further step will be the certification of sleep centers.

We believe that the most valuable aspect about this process is the union of multiple specialties around the search for excellence in the practice of sleep medicine in Colombia.

CITATION

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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