Andrea Exeni

Argentina is a country with 40,117,096 million of inhabitants its current administrative division establishes twenty-three provinces and a federal district – the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. There are 12,333,747 children under 18 years of age (30.74%).

We are approximately 120 pediatric nephrologists (78% females). 58% live in Buenos Aires and surroundings. In 4 of the 23 provinces there are no permanent pediatric nephrologist. Usually once a month a Pediatric Nephrologist travels from another province.

To become a Pediatric Nephrologist a complete training in clinical pediatrics is required. followed by a fellowship in Pediatric Nephrology. The University of Buenos Aires also offers a fellowship program. The specialist title is either awarded by the local Association of Medical Doctors in each district, the Argentinian Society of Pediatrics or the University of Buenos Aires. Within the public system the trainee receives a monthly remuneration during the complete fellowship.

Regarding scientific societies there is a Nephrology Committee in the Argentinean Society of Pediatrics. It renovates its authorities every three years. It has an educational purpose and works in elaborating consensus and multicentric studies. There are meetings for all pediatric nephrologists every 4 months that take place in Buenos Aires and through web way can be transmitted to all the country. This is very important to continue our education.

The Argentinean Congress of Pediatric Nephrology takes place every 3 years and besides international meetings we participate actively in the Latin American Society of Pediatric Nephrology (ALANEPE) Congress also every 3 years.

The ALANEPE Journal, “Archivos Latinoamericanos de Nefrologia Pediatrica”, was founded in our country in 2001 and strongly contributes to education of Pediatric Nephrologists all over Latin America. In the last few years there has been an increasing production in basic research mainly in the National Academy of Medicine, the University of Buenos Aires and Mendoza achieving important knowledge.
Pediatric Nephrologists have also participated as professors in the IPNA teaching program throughout Latin America.

The health system in Argentina is either public, with health insurance or private. It is very important to understand that even though we are a developing country our public system offers patients with no resources medical attention of high quality in all areas of the medical system. Acute dialysis techniques (peritoneal and hemodialysis) are widely available in Hospitals Specialized centers offer CRRT in neonatal Intensive Care patients. Nevertheless there is still an heterogeneous distribution of resources.

Dialysis and transplantation in patients with no economic resources is provided by the Government with no cost for the patient. Despite the fact that many centers offer peritoneal dialysis and hemodialysis as mentioned before there is heterogeneity in our health system throughout the country.

In terms of area, Argentina is the second largest country of South America after Brazil, and the 8th largest country in the world. Its total area is approximately 2.7 million km². Despite the fact that there are many Pediatric Nephrologists in our country still very young patients need to travel large distances to other cities either to enroll in Pediatric dialysis programs because of lack of resources.

We have a Central Unique National Institute of Ablation and Implant Coordinator (INCUCAI) which is the body that promotes, regulates, coordinates and supervises the activities of donation and transplantation of organs, tissues and cells in our country. Acts in the Argentine provinces with 24 jurisdictions of ablation and implant. The mission of INCUCAI is to promote, regulate and coordinate the activities related to the procurement and transplantation of organs, tissues and cells at the national level, guaranteeing transparency, equity and quality. It also provides a vigorous control in follow up and in keeping the registry of all these patients to date.

To the date there are 356 patients under 18 years in chronic dialysis: 166 in peritoneal dialysis, 185 patients in hemodialysis and 13 in hemodiafiltration. 89 (25%) of these children are in waiting list for renal transplantation, other 19 patients are in waiting list for preemptive renal transplant.
The first renal pediatric transplant in Argentina was performed in 1961, since then the programs have been growing. There are 11 pediatric units that perform renal transplantation. Even though renal transplants are mainly concentrated in Buenos Aires other 4 provinces perform transplants as well. Patients that travel from all over the country to receive the renal transplant then have to travel periodically for follow up.

In Argentina renal transplantation is mainly performed with cadaver donor. In 2017 148 pediatric patients under 18 years were transplanted (105 cadaver donor) and in 2018 141 to the date (113 cadaver donor).

Follow up of all pediatric patients is very close during the pediatric period but we are still working in difficulties in the Transition programs. This is a very important issue and the Pediatric Nephrology community is working hard to design the correct strategy to guarantee adequate follow up of the patients.

In conclusion
Argentina has an active and devoted Pediatric Nephrology community that provides high quality medicine and care to patients with renal disease. Patients have direct access to the specialist. There is a network of nephrologists and coordinated work is achieved mainly though scientific societies. Our public health provides patients with no economic resources with all treatments needed.