Argentina

1. State of Clinical Engineering (CE) - Health Technology Management (HTM) – Body of Practice (BOP)

Many Provincial Ministries of Health, have incorporated the Healthcare Technologies Management office in their organizational structure.

The advancement of regulatory frameworks such as the National Law Nº 26.906: “Traceability Regime and Verification of the Technical Aptitude of Health Medical Products in use”, as well as other laws and provincial decrees, ensures a safer environment in Healthcare Institutions. The purpose of the Law is to establish the traceability regime for active medical products, the metrological traceability, and the creation of Biomedical Technology Departments throughout the national territory.

Resolutions PAHO/WHO CD42.R10-2000 and WHO 60.29-2007, had high impact on the development and strengthening of the CE professionals involved in the purchase and maintenance of medical devices. Guided by National Ministry of Health, the National Quality Program started to contribute through different internal Committees to develop guidelines and processes to reduce accidents or adverse events with patients. The role of CE and HTM Departments is to regularly train on equipment use, check device performance based on National Laws and guidelines, and provide advice on purchases.

Clinical Engineering Departments are increasingly working with IT Departments to integrate devices with the Electronic Medical Records, but still there is a disparity between different States, and Public-Private sectors.

The National Commission for Health Technology Assessment of Argentina, created two years ago, can work integrated with CE and HTM professionals.

2. How would you suggest to show the Value of and from having CE-HTM program

Clinical Engineering practices or internships in Hospitals, are a good opportunity for public or private hospitals, to manage their medical technologies. In Argentina, several states have implemented those programs successfully. Ministries of Health must define strategies to continue them. It should be a requisite to get the certification or grade, in every Province.

3. Example of success stories where CE supported patient outcomes

- The RedArETS (Argentine Public Network of Health Technologies Evaluation) is a network of non-profit public institutions, constituted by 7 provincial Ministries of Health, Universities, El Cruce Hospital, the Superintendence of Health Services and the National Cancer Institute; plus a network of national and international collaborators. Their Vision is to develop a system of sustainable, inter-jurisdictional and public cooperation related to Health Technologies Evaluation in Argentina, sharing their resources and offering the production, to all decision makers, to obtain more efficient and equitable healthcare results (www.redarets.com.ar). It was created in 2012, having now, 13 active nodes in the network.
• The Ministry of Health of the Province of Neuquén, is advised to take decisions on incorporation, indications of use, disposal by obsolescence or disinvestment on health technologies, by the Provincial Committee of Biotechnologies. Created in 2010, it is a multidisciplinary team of clinical or biomedical engineers, doctors, economists and pharmacists; develop reports of technologies evaluations, health map approaches, implementation, clinical practice guides, and medical equipment census, among others.

• Clinical Engineers around the country, have created a WhatsApp group. Argentina had a whole country power outage in June 2019 for some hours. Unfortunately, some hospitals were not well prepared for that. The group decided to start a survey about Electric Generators in Hospitals which are directly involved in the use of medical devices, get the status of them, and push authorities to solve problems found. This was published through the Argentinean Bioengineering Society website, to give it more entity. This way of networking is very useful to share data related to CE and HTM activities.

4. CE Education program available (levels and content) – Body of Knowledge (BOK)
About 11 Universities, offer Biomedical or Bioengineering programs, some with post-degree in Clinical Engineering.

Titles granted after five years of study are: “Bioengineer” or “Biomedical Engineer”. All have in their programs Clinical Engineering contents, some with greater intensity than others. Currently there are more than 1700 biomedical engineers and bioengineers, working in different areas of specialty. The CE both in the public sphere as in the private sector, has a great demand mainly, due to the large technological advances applied to medicine.

The academic offer in post degree formation is lower, as only the most ancient universities dictate master degrees or specializations in Clinical Engineering.

A HTM International Certification is being evaluated to be in line with other countries and latest developments.

5. CE Association/Society and Credentialing/Certification program if available
The Argentinian Society for Bioengineering (SABI) has created the Clinical Engineering Chapter on its Statute. Relaunched at SABI 2017 Congress, the CE Chapter updates topics through their website, promoting CE education, HTM initiatives, Government sensitization about CE roles and needs around Argentina. SABI is affiliated to the International Federation on Medicine and Biological Engineering (IFMBE).

Other objectives are coordinate similar strategies of work among colleagues of all Provinces, share information on suppliers and technical documentation (virtual library), getting up-to-date information on changes and/or modifications to international standards on the subject. These actions are of great value, since the realities of the 24 provinces are very different due to their geographical characteristics, and the socioeconomic situations. SABI is working with other Scientific Societies like Argentinean Cardiology Society and Medical Physics Society, to share knowledge, experiences, research and development.

www.ced.ifmbe.org
Additionally, there has been an increase in relations with international Associations and Societies related to Clinical Engineering.

Four months ago, the American College of Clinical Engineering and SABI, signed an agreement of mutual collaboration and assistance.

6. CE major challenges (think of 3 subjects)
   - Achieve greater adaptation to the law N. 26.906 mentioned before.
   - Be flexible in the difficult country’s economic context, to keep the health technologies management active and secure.
   - Increase the number of CE educational programs and certifications.

7. What is the most important action you will support to increase CE recognition
Promote the role of Clinical Engineers from Ministries or Secretaries of Health (National, State and Municipal). Prepare all stakeholders (Universities, Manufacturers, Government, Professional Associations, Service Providers) to work jointly with future technologies. Continue expanding their knowledge, networking and involvement worldwide.

German Giles germangiles@gmail.com
Marcelo Lencina mhlencina@gmail.com