Panama City (Panama), October 10th and 11th, 2011

The Second Workshop of the Latin American Program of Semen Analysis Standardization (PLEAS) was conducted in Panama City (Panama) between October 10th and 11th, 2011 at the Gorgas Memorial Institute of Health Studies. The Organizing Committee was directed by Dr. Luis Sarabia (Chile, PLEAS’s President), Dr. Dr. María José Munuce (Argentina, PLEAS’s Vice-President), Edgar Peña (Nicaragua, PLEAS’s treasurer) and, the local collaboration of Mr. Erick Chu (Panama, and current Panama coordinator).

The event was held with the generous support of the International Society of Andrology (ISA) and sponsorship by the Association of Latin American Researchers on Human Reproduction (ALIRH, for its acronym on spanish) as a pre-meeting activity for the XXII Meeting of ALIRH also conducted in Panama City between October 12th and October 14th.

During this meeting, the 5th edition of the WHO laboratory manual for the examination and processing of human semen was discussed by the audience made a special focus in sperm morphology with strict criteria. Thirty-eight participants from twelve countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela) were involved in the activity.

The funds granted by ISA were used to pay expenses to Dr. Bertha Pendas from Cuba as well as part of the hosting of the teachers in charge of the Workshop. The rest of the budget was provided by our own funds generated by the workshop as well as ALIRH support. We also appreciate the
generosity of Merck-Serono, who gave the coffee-breaks and lunches for all participants.

Prior to the workshop, every student conducted an evaluation of a slide of sperm morphology as they performed routinely and was considered like Pre-Test. This exercise was repeated at the end of the workshop after the two-day training course and was considered as Post-Test. A panel of trained experts performed the same evaluation.

Left: dispersion of results before the workshop (Pre-Test) were minimum 0%, maximum 88%, mean 38% ±1SD (29%). Right: results dispersion in reading the same plate at the end the workshop (Post-Test) were minimum 3%, maximum 29%, mean 11% ±1SD (7%). The percentage of normal forms assessed by two independent experts was 9%. (p value < 0.001)

Degree of dispersion in the evaluation of normal human sperm morphology for the 38 participants.

The main conclusion of the event was that Latin American countries should make efforts to achieve the standardization in the evaluation of semen analysis throughout the use of the fifth edition of the WHO Laboratory Manual for the Examination and Processing of Human Semen. Also, the importance of conducting workshops to disseminate the WHO guidelines and build consensus among andrologists -and thereby assuring quality and comparability among all countries- was very clear.
Finally, it was proposed to organize the Second Course and Third Workshop of PLEAS during the meeting of the Latin American Association of Researchers in Human Reproduction in Mexico City in 2013.

On behalf of PLEAS and our 4 collaborators who received economical support from ISA for their assistance to the previously mentioned meeting, I would like to express my sincere gratefulness.

Prof. Luis Sarabia Villar
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