



Editorials

The 2023 meeting of the Latin American Association for the Study of the Liver: A summary and looking ahead



It is estimated that more than 600 million people live in Latin America and the Caribbean, spanning nearly 40 countries. The incidence of chronic liver disease and liver cirrhosis has markedly increased in this region over the last 30 years [1]. This trend represents an important and multifaceted healthcare challenge, with significant implications for healthcare systems and research.

The scientific meeting of the Latin American Association for the Study of the Liver (*Asociación Latino Americana para el Estudio del Hígado*) offers an excellent opportunity to promote knowledge in the field, share opinions, establish networks and present the results of research. The wide variety of professionals who attend these meetings allows us to observe our region's heterogeneity and identify areas of opportunity for promoting healthcare and research projects.

At the 2023 gathering of the organization, 150 abstracts were published, of which 52% were retrospective, 30% cross-sectional and 18% prospective studies. Prognostic/epidemiological studies represented the most common type of research, accounting for 67.3% of the total, followed by diagnostic and interventional studies at 16.7% and 14%, respectively. It is worth noting that basic research accounted for only 2%. A median of nine authors collaborated on each abstract. Latin America and the Caribbean were the main sources of abstracts (89.3%), followed by Europe (10.7%). Among countries, Argentina submitted the largest number of abstracts, contributing 20.6% of the total, followed by Brazil at 16.6%, Mexico at 15.3%, Paraguay at 5.3%, and Chile and Colombia at 4.6% each (Table 1).

Some 22% of cases involved collaboration with researchers from outside the region, with authors from the United States (6.66%), Spain (6.66%), Canada (3.33%) and the Netherlands (2%) contributing abstracts, among others.

The most frequently addressed topics were viral hepatitis at 22% (both viral hepatitis B and viral hepatitis C), liver cirrhosis at 10%, the spectrum of liver disease associated with metabolic dysfunction at 12.7%, followed by hepatocellular carcinoma at 12%, liver cirrhosis decompensation at 12%, and acute-on-chronic liver failure at 2.7%. These numbers should be interpreted with caution but provide a good proxy for the research activity in our region.

It has become clear that the trend in our field is to shift from abstracts towards peer-reviewed publications [2,3], requiring additional effort. More work is needed to identify the factors that might impede publication in the future [4], and to determine what will be required to promote publication of research in peer-reviewed journals.

Table 1
Characteristics of abstracts presented at ALEH's meeting (n = 150).

Characteristics	Frequency n (%)
Study design	
Retrospective	78 (52%)
Cross-sectional	44 (30%)
Prospective	28 (18%)
Type of study	
Prognostic/epidemiological	101 (67.3%)
Diagnostic	25 (16.7%)
Interventional	21 (14%)
Basic research	3 (2%)
Number of authors	
1 – 3	9 (6%)
4 – 7	46 (30.7%)
8 – 11	44 (29.3%)
12 – 15	23 (15.3%)
> 16	28 (18.7%)
Countries	
Argentina	31 (20.6%)
Brazil	25 (16.6%)
Mexico	23 (15.3%)
Paraguay	8 (5.3%)
Chile	7 (4.6%)
Colombia	7 (4.6%)
Guatemala	3 (2%)
Collaboration outside Latin America	33 (22%)
Collaborations with countries outside Latin America	
United States	10 (6.66%)
Spain	10 (6.66%)
Canada	5 (3.33%)
Netherlands	3 (2%)
Sweden	1 (0.66%)
Switzerland	1 (0.66%)
New Zealand	1 (0.66%)
Germany	1 (0.66%)
France	1 (0.66%)
Topics	
Viral hepatitis C	25 (16.7%)
MAFLD/NAFLD	19 (12.7%)
Hepatocellular carcinoma	18 (12%)
Liver Cirrhosis	15 (10%)
Decompensated liver cirrhosis	8 (5.3%)
Viral hepatitis B	8 (5.3%)
Acute on Chronic Liver Failure	4 (2.7%)
Others	53 (35.3%)

ALEH, Asociación Latino Americana para el Estudio del Hígado. Data shown is n and (%).

Declaration of interests

None.

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