

INTEREST GROUP UPDATE

Academic General Internal Medicine in Latin America Interest Group

Eliseo J. Perez-Stable, MD, and Raul Mejia, MD

Dr. Perez-Stable is with the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, and Dr. Mejia is with Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES) and Hospital de Clinicas, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Academic General Internal Medicine interest group was established at the 1993 SGIM Annual Meeting and led by Eliseo Pérez-Stable and Edgardo Vazquez. SGIM Council approved an affiliation agreement at the time with the *Sociedad Argentina de Medicina Interna General* (SAMIG) in recognition of the nascent interest in ambulatory education, clinical research, and generalist principles in providing care in Argentina. Over the past 22 years, the interest group has focused on three main objectives: 1) to discuss specific public health problems that affect Latin America and how these impact the role of the primary care generalist, 2) to share results of research studies completed in Latin American countries frequently in collaboration with funded researchers in the United States, and 3) to facilitate networking between general internists from the United States and Latin American countries and to en-

hance South-South communication among researchers.

At every SGIM annual meeting, the interest group has brought together general internists based in Latin America as well as SGIM members who have worked in Latin America or have a special interest in the area. Up to three short presentations about relevant topics are offered with a special emphasis on a general internal medicine perspective. Some examples of topics include the implementation of a patient-centered medical home in Argentina; the impact of managed care in Latin America; tobacco industry interference in medical meetings in Latin America; and comparisons of health care systems and problems in Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, and Argentina. Investigators from Latin America also present the results of research projects performed in their countries. The meeting provides a forum for discussion, education, and networking.

Every year colleagues with an interest in Latin America join the interest group and identify opportunities for implementing workshops or meetings outside the United States and placing interested students or residents in clinical or research experiences. There have been at least five SGIM members who have been on a sabbatical leave in Latin America during this time and a dozen others who have been invited as visiting professors. Medical students and residents have also been funded by institutional summer grants to conduct research and have international clinical experiences.

With the passage of time, the interest group has become a space for discussing the growth and evolution of models of general internal medicine in Latin American countries. We invite all SGIM members interested in Latin America health issues to join the interest group at the 2016 annual meeting.

SGIM