

# Latin American critical care events, June 2006



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## INTRODUCTION

During June 2006 two major Latin American critical care events took place. Ged Williams reports:

### VENEZUELA

- In mid-June 2006 critical care nurses and doctors from South America and around the world descended on the island of Margarita, Venezuela for three significant events, which were held concurrently:
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Society of Venezuelan Intensive Care Nurses (SOCVECI)
- 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of Venezuelan Critical Care Medicine
- Preliminary meeting of Latin American critical care nursing leaders and World Federation of Critical Care Nurses

### The conference

Sociedad Científica Venezolana De Enfermería Cuidados Intensivos (SOCVECI) or the Scientific Society of Venezuelan Intensive Care Nurses has approximately 800 members and is the professional society representing the needs of critical care nurses and patients in Venezuela. It is a well-organised and active association, providing regular national and regional conferences and workshops, a website ([www.socveci.org](http://www.socveci.org)), policy and practice advice and professional representation. SOCVECI worked collaboratively with Sociedad Venezolana Medicina Crítica (SVMC) (Society of Venezuelan Critical Care Medicine) to host the conference, which was held in June 2006 in Margarita.

Representing the physicians, Dr. Jose Beso, former President of SVMC and current President of the World Federation of Societies of Intensive Care and Critical Care Medicine (WFSICCM) co-hosted the conference, during which the Council meeting of WFSICCM was held. Representing critical care nurses, Raiza Rada, President of SOCVECI and Council member of World Federation of Critical Care Nurses (WFCCN), was co-host. The conference was attended by 820 participants who came from all over the world: Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, France, India, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, South Africa, United States, UK, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The nursing conference offered a broad program ranging from the major symposium topics of paediatric and neonatal nursing care, pharmacology, nutrition, bioethics, management, infection control, pre-hospital care and monitoring in ICU to workshops on conducting ICU research, nutrition care and the nursing role, writing a nursing publication, and pain and analgesia management.

The quality of presentations, knowledge and skill of Venezuelan critical care nurses was comparable to western critical care nursing standards. However, nurses reported that the lack of resources dedicated to health and the limited nursing and medical staffing ratios create major challenges to care and quality of outcomes for the broader community in Venezuela.

During the conference two critical care leaders' achievements were

honoured: Dr. Jose Beso for his work in critical care medicine and MgSC Consuelo Colmenares for her work in critical care nursing. Typical of Venezuelan hospitality and friendship, each evening consisted of a range of social activities such as dinner and salsa dancing by the pool, dinner and salsa dancing on the beach, and dinner and salsa dancing wherever and whenever – that's the Venezuelan way!

A lot was achieved in four days. Venezuelan critical care nurses demonstrated their professionalism and organisational abilities and showcased the technical and professional skills that they are able to provide to their patients. The nursing leaders of the region demonstrated collaboration and co-operation across geo-political and language boundaries that would impress any diplomat, and a lot of fun and friendship was had by all.



**Photograph 1.** Members of the preliminary meeting of FLECI in Venezuela

### Meeting of Latin American critical care nursing leaders and WFCCN

During the conference a meeting of Latin American critical care nursing leaders was held to plan the formation of a federation of critical care nursing societies in Central and South America. 25 nursing leaders from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela and WFCCN Council members met to review and progress the development of a Central and South American critical care nursing federation (see photograph 1). This meeting built upon the network established previously and the preliminary discussions that took place during the WFSICCM/WFCCN world conference held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in August the previous year (Williams, 2005).

Several key decisions were made, including the name of the new organisation: **Federacion Latino-americana de Enfermería en Cuidado Intensivo (FLECI)** (Latin American Federation of Intensive Care Nurses). The FLECI constitution, based on the WFCCN constitution, was drafted in Spanish and agreed. It was decided that a further meeting of FLECI would be held in Peru in November 2006 to coincide with its critical care nursing conference. With the launch of FLECI in Peru it is planned to ratify the constitution and name it the Declaration of Lima.

## COLOMBIA

Following the meeting in Venezuela, a critical care conference took place on 24 June 2006 in San Jose de Cucuta in the south eastern region of Colombia. The event was hosted by Nubia Agudelo Sedano, Charge Nurse of the intensive care unit at ESE Hospital Univeristario Erasmo Meoz. Raiza Rada (Venezuela), Laura Alberto (Argentina) and Ged Williams (Australia) were invited participants and represented WFCCN (see photograph 2). Major conference themes included mechanical ventilation and sepsis as well as introductions to the work of WFCCN, including presentations of the position statements on education and workforce.

In the evening a meeting was held with Colombian critical care nursing leaders, WFCCN representatives and the Asociacion Nacional de Enfermeras de Colombia (ANEC) [National Association of Colombian Nurses], the peak nursing body in Colombia. The purpose of the meeting was to explore proposals to form an official Colombian critical care nursing organisation. Three models were explored: working as i) a sub-group of the existing medical critical care society, ii) a subgroup of ANEC, or iii) as an independent association. Whilst a final decision was not reached, a clear pathway was made for continued discussion and planning. Furthermore, Columbian critical care nursing leaders have now formed a network that is focused on establishing a solid professional organisation to support critical care nurses in Colombia. It is anticipated that a formal structure will be established for Colombian critical care



nurses in the coming year.

**Photograph 2.** Colombian critical care nursing leaders with WFCCN representatives Laura Alberto (2<sup>nd</sup> from left), Ged Williams (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), and Nubia Agudelo Sedano (4<sup>th</sup> from left).

## REFERENCES

Williams, G. (2005). Personal reflections on Buenos Aires and the WFCCN (Editorial). *CONNECT: The World of Critical Care Nursing* 4 (2), 27.