

Reports from the National/Area Secretaries

A multi-disciplinary and participative approach in Occupational Health and Safety to face the challenges related to emerging Diseases in workers

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In the last decade, there have been many changes in statistics of job injuries and occupational diseases in LMICs from Latin-América. In Perú, even though new legislation and an increasing number of OHS professionals have contributed to improve working conditions and prevention of diseases in workers in some sectors, emerging diseases related to ergonomic, psychosocial, chemical, mechanical and other type of risk factors, still represent a challenge for companies and OHS professionals.

From the ICOH National Secretary (NS) for Perú, we have prioritized in Education in OHS, creating forums for occupational physicians, researchers, professors and other professionals for sharing experiences, for discussion of research results, for promoting the networking and collaboration between ICOH members from Perú, Latin-America and other regions, and for strengthening the cooperation between Perú NS and ICOH Scientific Committees too.

The 1st webinar organised and hosted by the NS for Perú, titled “Sleep Disorders, Chronic Diseases and Workers Health” focused on the general overview of working time and shiftwork in some sectors in Perú and Latin-America, the most prevalent sleep disorders in working population and their impact on cardiovascular, metabolic and other type of diseases. Finally, strategies and opportunities for improving programs of Prevention and Health Promotion at work were discussed between speakers and the attendees.

The free webinar was held on 11th September 2024. The speakers were Dr. Eduardo Bazan Lavanda, physician specialized in Sleep medicine and Internal Medicine, and dr.

Norvil Mera Chu, current ICOH NS for Perú and researcher in sleep disorders in workers. Dr. Shyam Pingle (ICOH Vice-President) and Dr. Mahinda Seneviratne (ICOH Board Member) welcomed over 100 Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) professionals from Latin-America, USA, Europe, Asia and Africa who connected and had a very active participation.



The NS of Perú then collaborate with the NS of Colombia (Dr. Diana Cuervo), South Africa (Dr. Claudina Nogueira) and Argentina (Dr. Adolfo Hernández-current NS and Dr. Claudio Taboadela-past NS) to organised and hosted a webinar titled “Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in Mining: An overview of management, legislation, and current challenges in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)”. This event allowed that 4 countries joined to analyse the legislation, OHS practices, statistics and results in terms of Job Accidents and Diseases, and to discuss about the need to improve OHS systems, policies and programs in Latin-America, Africa and other regions, proposing potential solutions according to each country context.

The free webinar was held on Saturday 21 September 2024

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with two presentations in English and two in Spanish. From the NS of Perú, Dr. Mirella Bernal (lawyer and Specialist in OH in Mining) presented “Mining in Latin America: Comparison between selected countries in the region, including informal mining”. Also, Dr. Norvil Mera Chu (occupational physician and current NS for Perú) was the responsible for the wrap-up with closing remarks, and vote of thanks.



For Perú, October is a very important month due to Occupational Medicine Day (4th October) and the National Day of Medicine (5th October). So the NS for Perú in collaboration with ICOH Scientific Committee (SC) on Occupational Medicine organised and hosted the 3rd webinar titled “Occupational Medicine: a look at the past for projecting the future”, which was held on 4 October 2024 and included the participation of 2 speakers: dr. Krishna Nirmalya Sen, from India, as Past Chair of ICOH SC on OH in the Construction Industry, and Dr. Denis Barnaby, from Perú, as Past NS of ICOH for Perú and 1st ICOH member in Perú.

The event offered a platform for occupational physicians and OHS Professionals to review the contribution of Dr. Bernardino Ramazzini to the field and the origins of Occupational Medicine in Perú and Latin-America. Speakers and attendees could exchange ideas of future potential cooperation between countries to organize and participate in academic activities and about the needs and challenges for ICOH members, especially in Latin-America.

Dr. Shyam Pingle (ICOH Vice-President) and Dr. Hosanna Rodríguez (Current Chair of the Latin-American Association of Occupational Health) welcomed all the attendees from North and Latin-America, Asia and Africa. Dr. Norvil Mera Chu (current NS for Perú) moderate the webinar and conducted the questions from the audience. Finally, Dr. Vishnumohan Janardhanam, in representation of the SC on Occupational Medicine, closed this academic event and encouraged participants to continue working for improving work environments and workers’ health and safety around the world.



In October, the NS for Perú also participated in the International Diploma on Occupational Health organised by the Latin-American Association of Occupational Health, during the class held on 12 October in which Dr. Shyam Pingle was the main lecturer. Dr. Norvil Mera Chu was invited for the for the wrap-up with closing remarks, and vote of thanks.



Besides the webinars and collaborations, the NS for Perú

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has been organising meetings (in person and online) with university students, post-graduated students and the Social Health Insurance from Perú, including provinces out of the capital, such as Piura and Puno. The objective of these meetings was to provide information about ICOH, the benefits of membership, the academic activities, etc to promote that more OHS professionals may affiliate.



The NS for Perú is currently working on future activities. One of them is the EPICOH Early Career Conference that will be held in Barcelona, in November 2024. In this event, Dr. Norvil Mera Chu is member of the Organising Committee which includes (for the very 1st time) Early Career Researchers in Occupational epidemiology and Occupational Health from different countries. He will also have an oral presentation and other activities during the conference.

For 2025, the NS for Perú has joined efforts to the SC on Occupational Medicine (SCOM) for organising the 2nd Conference on Occupational Medicine “Future and Opportunities for Occupational Medicine” which will be held in Lima, Perú from 27 to 29 November 2025. The objective is to update about emerging occupational diseases, their impact on the population, and their prevention with a holistic approach where there will be a medical, management and legal perspective. The aim is to obtain the participation of occupational doctors and other OSH professionals, of course from Peru, but also from neighbouring countries and other regions. The organising committee includes OHS experts from Perú, SCOM Staff and different regions.