



Guidelines in Latin America

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Situation in Latin America

- ⇒ Economic recession
- ⇒ Decentralizing budget and responsibility for the delivery of basic services put decision-making closer to the people
- ⇒ Social movements can lead to more participatory decision-making as in the public monitoring of local budgets
- ⇒ In Porto Alegre, Brazil public monitoring of local budget has brought huge improvement in services
- ⇒ Such collective action improves basic services and helps spur and sustain political will.

Health sector in Latin America

- ⇒ health sector reform is underway in Latin America
- ⇒ fragmented health services
- ⇒ lack of capability or will to manage the health system changes
- ⇒ population regards hospital care as the best, while the health system recommends the gate of primary health
- ⇒ social culture in the media reflects the emphasis on the specialist care
- ⇒ there is insufficient essential resources to develop an effective health care

High Technology in Latin America

- ⇒ high technology in the health sector is not widely available for those who can not afford
- ⇒ public health sector has difficulty to update the technology
- ⇒ insufficient access to basic health programmes (ex: screening coverage of papanicolau is around 30%)
- ⇒ research is being financed by pharmaceutical industry, although more bioethics committees are being implemented
- ⇒ inequity in society reflects difficult access to specialist technology
- ⇒ physician training is changing to a more human and comprehensive approach, although the reality of the health system shows a lack of access for those who are more in need

How is the situation on Guidelines in Latin America?

- ⇒ Although, guidelines in the region, in general, are based on a consensus of expert opinion or on unsystematic literature surveys which have been criticised as not reflecting current medical knowledge and being liable to bias
- ⇒ There is no network being developed on Guidelines in the region, as far as I know
- ⇒ Most guidelines do not cover a more comprehensive approach – emphasis on the medical side

How are guidelines being developed?

- ⇒ Guidelines most of the time are not essentially the direct product of the systematic review and are not easily available for the general practitioners who are in the front line
- ⇒ The stages of the review process are not thoroughly documented

Guidelines development background in Latin America

- ⇒ Health Division has among their structure 3 areas in charge of developing guidelines:
 - Health Programs (maternal-child health, elderly health ...)
 - Health services within the Ambulatory Units and Hospitals, responsible for specific disease guidelines
 - Special multidisciplinary commissions

How is the development of guidelines in Latin America?

- ⇒ There are guidelines produced combining the evidence from the literature about effectiveness (and at times cost) with value judgements and knowledge of availability of resources.
- ⇒ As the resources available in the US and Canada are much greater than in Latin American, favorable recommendations for use of these guidelines are of questionable value for general use.
- ⇒ Ethical questions in the process of a therapeutic decision as there is pharmaceutical companies pressure

Guidelines for early diagnosis

- ⇒ From the community point of view it is much more important to screen and to propose an effective early treatment in individuals who do not have symptoms than it is in those who are already symptomatic ones
- ⇒ As there is lack of resources and tests are not available for everyone, it leads to inequity of care
- ⇒ Access to health care is not available for those who are at greater risk
- ⇒ Health Authorities are in a constant challenge on how to allocate scarce resources (example: mammography for every women older than 50 years old)

Brazilian Medical Association and its experience on Guidelines

- ⇒ Brazilian Medical Association and Medical Federal Council have developed a series of guidelines which is available on the site: www.amb.org.br
- ⇒ Systematic reviews of the literature was developed
- ⇒ Agree instrument was applied and presented at the 2nd International Meeting in Palermo, Italy
- ⇒ Guidelines reflects the application for those who have access to a more effective care
- ⇒ 100 guidelines are available on the site

Conceição Hospital experience

- ⇒ There are 35 guidelines reviewed and available on the site www.ghc.com.br
- ⇒ The group of physicians and nurses have developed the guidelines
- ⇒ Now there is an interest to develop guidelines focusing:
 - a multidisciplinary approach
 - health care approach

Islands of excellence on the development of guidelines in Brazil

- ⇒ There are some good experiences such as:
 - Clinical Pharmacology based on evidence distributed to health centres around the country
 - Guidelines on special drugs
 - Several Public and Private Hospitals have developed guidelines that have a level of standard that are similar to the ones in the US and Europe

Weaknesses on the task of developing guidelines locally

- ⇒ Lack of appropriate (updated and quality) scientific evidence
- ⇒ Lack of participation of other health professionals in the process.
- ⇒ Inappropriate dissemination process
- ⇒ Lack of formal education on methodology
- ⇒ Absence of formal guidelines updating and evaluation proceedings

Major obstacles to guideline development and implementation in Latin America

- ⇒ Difficult to have access to find evidence reliable to the Latin American context, even though Cochrane Library is available free of charge
- ⇒ Lack of funding
- ⇒ No continuous guideline policy within the country and in Latin America
- ⇒ Primary health care infrastructure is being developed, even though there is demand to “buy” high technology
- ⇒ There is no development of a network in the region
- ⇒ There is no:
 - networking between the guideline development agencies across the different countries in the region
 - cross-border research projects on guideline related topics

Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) in Latin America

- ⇒ There is a trend to include EBM and critical appraisal in the medical curriculum and most young physicians in the near future will accept the importance of the development of guidelines as part of their job.
- ⇒ "best" evidence +clinical expertise +patient values are being incorporated in the training of future doctors

A better perspective

- ⇒ the need of getting more information on methodology, and
- ⇒ the need of setting priorities on guidelines development
- ⇒ develop guideline on a comprehensive health care perspective
- ⇒ a new agenda for Latin America is needed based on a network development







