

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR RAMON A. EXENI

The Life Time Achievement Award of IPNA recognizes individuals who have dedicated their life to the development and improvement of Pediatric Nephrology care in areas where there is a particular need and has obtained successful advancements.

In 2019, Dr. Ramon A Exeni was awarded the IPNA Life Time Achievement Award.



1. **You specialized in Pediatric nephrology when it was a relatively new specialty. What inspired you to choose Pediatric nephrology as your specialty?**

Probably the lack of Pediatric nephrologists and the large number of patients with kidney diseases, especially HUS, decided me to dedicate myself to this specialty

2. **You are a pioneer in Pediatric nephrology in Latin America and founded the Argentinian Society of Pediatric Nephrology and ALANAPE. Can you share with us**

the satisfaction and challenges that you faced during the early years of Pediatric Nephrology in Latin America?

The creation of the Pediatric Nephrology Committee of the Argentinian Society of Paediatrics was crucial for the development of Pediatric Nephrology in Argentina. Back then the few enthusiastic Pediatric nephrologists became in contact with young paediatricians that then joined the specialty.

It was the cornerstone for the high level of development achieved and the foundations for the creation of ALANEPE. This Committee organized in Buenos Aires a meeting with many of the Latin-American Pediatric Nephrologist leaders such as Dr Gustavo Gordillo from Mexico, Dr Jose Grunberg from Uruguay and Dr Carlos Gianantonio from Argentina. A significant number of young Argentinian Nephrologists together with colleagues from Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Uruguay and Mexico also attended this meeting.

The creation of ALANEPE allowed the organization of Congresses, the first one in Viña del Mar (Chile)and the participation in the Board of Directors of IPNA of 4 representatives, which promoted the scientific growth and the relations between both Societies.

ALANEPE grew rapidly. I consider the one important factor was the publication of the official journal Latin American Archives of Pediatric Nephrology in 2001 with permanent headquarters in Argentina and that continues to be published.

3. You trained at least 34 Pediatric Nephrologists, many of whom have gone on to become leaders in the field of Pediatric nephrology. What do you think allowed your trainees to achieve so much success, and what advice do you have for nephrologists just starting out in the field?

The creation in 1987 of the Fellows program in Nephrology with a duration of 3 years and 2 candidates per year was for sure very important.

In 2011, the University degree of Pediatric nephrologist with positions for foreigners was added, which allowed the arrival of doctors from all over Latin America

I think the success can be due to very personalized training, in hospitals that manage great amount of patients with kidney disease .

The program was and continues to be very successful and from there arose the 34 nephrologists distributed in various hospitals in Argentina and Latin America.

The best advice I can give to the new generations is never stop learning, never lose enthusiasm and always accept new challenges.

4. **Your first scientific research was published in 1971 and now that you are in your early eighties, you are still publishing articles in renowned journals. What has been your inspiration throughout the years?**

I continue my activity in the Nephrology Service of a Children's Hospital, despite my age I have not retired yet. I keep close contact with patients and colleagues. This keeps my enthusiasm.

My passion and inspiration have mainly been and is HUS. We have directed our research to the study of the inflammatory response in HUS with great results, working in association with researchers from the National Academy of Medicine. This is very challenging and keeps my "nephrology flame" always lighted.

5. **You became a member of IPNA in 1987 and has been actively involved with IPNA activities since 1993. Can you share your experiences and thoughts on IPNA?**

My activity at IPNA was very intense since for 6 years I held the position of councillor and another 6 more as Assistant Secretary. These were very memorable and productive years. The experience of working with Dr Ira Greifer and Dr Mathias Brandis was very enriching.

Through ALANEPE we could communicate the activities of IPNA and we actively participated in the two World Congresses held in Chile and Brazil as well as the Teaching Courses throughout Latin America.

I was actively involved in the development of Pediatric Nephrology and we collaborated with Dr Greifer in the inclusion of Africa in the IPNA and increased the number of IPNA partners in Latin America

In IPNA I found colleagues and friends and I felt part of a group that was helping to change the lives of children with kidney diseases throughout the world.

6. **What was your reaction when you were told that you will be awarded the Life Time Achievement Award?**

I never expected to receive the award. I was very surprised. Having been chosen among prominent figures in Pediatric Nephrology was an incredible honour. I was born in little town up in the North of Argentina and with effort and a great amount of conviction I could make it happen. I could contribute to the development of Pediatric Nephrology in Latin America. I felt I received a distinction for a life time dedication to what is my passion.

It was also an invaluable family event considering that my 2 daughters are Pediatric nephrologists and my wife is a doctor.



On the other hand, it is a stimulus for all Latin American nephrologists who enjoyed this award with us and honestly I felt it was for all of them as well. Without team work this could have not been possible. It was one of the most important moments in my life. I am very grateful to IPNA for the award.

7. Any other comments?

Thank you very much to IPNA for the help that I received during my life.