About the Spanish Society of Clinical Pharmacology

The Spanish Society of Clinical Pharmacology was founded in 1983 with the name of “Sociedad Española de Farmacología Clínica Hospitalaria-Spanish Society of Hospital Clinical Pharmacology”. The hospital adscription was included originally in the name of the society but the expansion of Clinical Pharmacology from the University hospitals to primary health care and other settings demanded for a change of name in 1990 into its current name “Sociedad Española de Farmacología Clínica, SEFC”. In Spain, Clinical Pharmacology is a recognized medical specialty, which is obtained after a 4 years period of hospital residency, with stays in clinical medicine departments (18 -24 months) and clinical pharmacology units (24-30 months). Nowadays, the society has around 300 members, mainly physicians with specialization in Clinical Pharmacology but also some members with other backgrounds and a professional relation with clinical pharmacology. The SEFC is member of the Federation of Scientific Medical Associations in Spain (FACME), the European Association on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (EACPT) and the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR).

The main areas of professional activity of SEFC members are the following:

Clinical practice.
Hospitals are still the main field of activity and half of SEFC members work in University hospitals. Since 1987, the Spanish legislation states that all University hospitals should have a Clinical Pharmacology Service and the current medicines legislation (Law 29/2006) establishes that all third-level hospitals should have clinical pharmacologists taking responsibility for selection of medicines, information, education and all possible activities pursuing to improve the pharmacological treatment of the patients both in hospitals and primary care. Unfortunately, this provision is not fully respected and there is a number of university and third-level hospitals without Clinical Pharmacologists. One of the tasks of the SEFC is to convince the Authorities of the benefit of having clinical pharmacologists in the hospital staff.

Pharmacovigilance and Pharmacoepidemiology
Many clinical pharmacologists in Spain focus their activity and research in this area, many of them as members of the Spanish Pharmacovigilance System. Clinical pharmacologists were in the 1980’s the key players for the implantation of the Yellow Card scheme in Spain and have now again lead the new active pharmacovigilance activities building some extremely valuable databases for research such as BIFAP or SIDIAP.

Research Ethics Committees
The expertise of clinical pharmacologists is considered a key knowledge for Research Ethics Committees (REC). The Spanish legislation (Law 29/2006) establishes that a clinical pharmacologist must be one of the members of any accredited REC. Some clinical pharmacologists have found here their main professional activity and had gone further in complementary topics such as bioethics. Others serve as members of one of the hundred Research ethics committees accredited in Spain as a complement to their main professional activity. The network of REC clinical pharmacologists is an active group of the SEFC and leads the organization of the National Annual Meeting of Research Ethics Committees, which is traditionally held at the margins of the Annual National Congress of the SEFC. Following last year good experience broadcasting the meeting via web we plan to broadcast the next REC National Meeting that will be held on the 2nd of October of 2014.
Support to clinical research
There is a need for professional support to clinical research linked to clinical practice and for many years clinical pharmacologists have been a valuable partner to clinicians in their research activities. This is an area of high demand for clinical pharmacologists although due to recent budgetary constraints and the low number of new residents of clinical Pharmacology per year, the demand is insufficiently covered. Nevertheless, this is a clear area of interest and activity for SEFC members either those belonging to the Spanish Clinical Research Network (SCReN) or those acting mainly at the local level or in Clinical Trials Units.

Teaching
The education of new medical graduates in clinical pharmacology is a key area to ensure a good medical care provision and an adequate use of medicines. Many clinical pharmacologists hold academic posts in addition to its clinical activity and participate in teaching activities. However, there is a trend to substitute retiring senior clinical pharmacologists for basic pharmacologists. The decrease of clinical pharmacologists posts in University is a major threat for a good competence in therapeutics, both to medical students and to post-graduates. This is a new area of concern at the SEFC which is being dealt by a specific working group on teaching activities.

Government and Regulatory Authorities
Clinical assessment of medicines before approval, evaluation of the therapeutic added value or selection of medicines for the National Health System are clear areas of activity for clinical pharmacologists. The Spanish Medicines Agency has a number of clinical pharmacologists in their staff and it is the most demanded place for temporary rotations by clinical pharmacology residents.

Pharmaceutical industry
Clinical pharmacologists are highly valued by the pharmaceutical industry in Spain because of their medical training and their skills and knowledge on drug development, pharmacovigilance systems, regulatory issues, benefit/risk and clinical effectiveness evaluation.

Journal and website
SEFC publishes one electronic journal named “Investigación Clínica y Bioética-ICB (Clinical Research and Bioethics). ICB accepts original or review articles aimed to disseminate the principles of clinical research and bioethics among members of Research Ethics Committees, clinical investigators and all professionals interested in clinical research. The journal, as well as other information about SEFC can be found in the website (http://www.se-fc.org).

Annual scientific meeting
Scientific meetings are organized annually since the first one held in 1983 in Santander, hosted by the Clinical Pharmacology Department of the Hospital Marqués de Valdecilla and University of Cantabria. The next Annual Congress will be held in Sevilla from 2nd to 4th October 2014.

Announcement: 2015 EACPT Congress in Madrid, Spain
The SEFC is honored to host the EACPT-2015 congress that will take place in Madrid from 27-30 June 2015. We invite clinical pharmacologists from Europe and the rest of the world to come to Spain and join the EACPT Congress. The SEFC board fully shares the EACPT aim of promoting collaboration and networking of clinical pharmacologists throughout Europe, as a key strategy for the consolidation of our discipline. It is difficult to imagine a better scenario for networking and sharing experiences than an early-summer meeting in Spain! We are looking forward to meeting you in Madrid.