



Editorial

Updated Strategic Plan of the Latin American Thoracic Association (ALAT). “The ten commandments for 2021–2026 quinquennial”[☆]



Actualización del Plan Estratégico de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Tórax (ALAT). «Los diez mandamientos para el quinquenio 2021–2026»

Introduction

Respiratory health has gained great relevance in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic that emerged in 2020, not only because of the direct physical damage caused by this disease, but because it has brought to light enormous global deficiencies and needs, particularly in Latin America. This pandemic has forced us to adapt, acquire new skills, undertake new functions, and give greater recognition to national and international scientific societies in order to face and overcome obstacles to progress.

The Latin American Thorax Association (ALAT) is celebrating its 25th anniversary¹. During this time, ALAT has become a fully established professional association that has concentrated its efforts and managed to fulfill most of the goals proposed in its strategic institutional plan for 2016–2020 (Table 1)².

The 2018–2020 Executive Committee is now addressing the need to update our objectives and draw up new ALAT guidelines for the period 2021–2026. Several meetings have been held (online due to the pandemic), attended by ALAT Executive Committee members 2018–2020 and 2020–2022, former presidents, distinguished members of the association, and ALAT administrative staff (Fig. 1). During this exercise, ALAT’s Mission and Vision were redefined, and its weaknesses, opportunities, strengths, and threats were identified. New strategic objectives based on the 5 pillars of the association were also proposed: Integration and Membership, Education and Extension, Research, Public Policy, and International Relations.

Our mission

Our mission is to promote high standards of quality of care in respiratory health in Latin America, through the promotion, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of respiratory diseases, the generation and dissemination of scientific knowledge, the continuing education of health personnel, and advocacy in the management of public health policies.

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Our vision

By 2030, ALAT will be established as the leading scientific association in respiratory health in Latin America, based on:

- 1 The construction of innovative, high-quality healthcare standards that are recognized and embraced by its members and partners, and that substantially benefit the respiratory health of the population of the region.
- 2 The promotion and dissemination of scientific knowledge applicable to the region, the advancement of technological developments, research, and scientific publications, disseminated by our own communication channels and those of our partners.
- 3 A wide range of educational programs is aimed at developing the expertise and skills of respiratory health professionals in the region.
- 4 The impact of the specialist advice on measures to improve respiratory health in Latin America that its executive team and other members provide both governments and decision-makers.
- 5 Participation, collaboration, and leadership in global respiratory health in partnership with other national and international societies and organizations responsible for managing policies for health promotion, prevention, and intervention, achieving greater visibility and agency.

Strategic objectives

- 1 **Continue the technological modernization and professionalization of ALAT’s administrative structure**
 - a Update the ALAT organization chart to reflect the current situation (see Fig. 2).
 - b Establish administrative and management sessions of the ALAT executive committee and scientific departments.
 - c Update technological tools used to promote, facilitate, support, and encourage teaching and research.
 - d Develop the ALAT digital platform for hosting all kinds of virtual and face-to-face events.
 - e Add new scientific departments that promote research, education, and sub-specializations in the care of different diseases.

Table 1
Implementation of the strategic objectives proposed in 2016 to date, in a color-coded model.

Strategic objectives 2016-2020		Compliance
1	Reorganize ALAT's management and administrative structures	Green
2	Launch new benefits for members and stakeholders	Green
3	Strengthen relationships with Latin American and international societies	Green
4	Promote the ALAT certification of excellence	Yellow
5	Participate in advancing respiratory specialties in Latin America	Red
6	Develop the institutional structure of the ALAT Congress	Green
7	Create the ALAT Academy	Yellow
8	Develop a publication plan	Yellow
9	Support the training of researchers and finance research projects	Green
10	Create the INSPIRA Foundation	Green

GREEN: YES; YELLOW: PARCIAL; RED: NO.



Figure 1. Participants in the ALAT Strategic Plan 2021–2026.

2 Improve the range of benefits offered to active ALAT members

- a Innovate and expand educational activities, symposia, and interactions between ALAT scientific departments and national and international societies.
- b Define and implement special fees for active members in training programs run by our society or other sister associations, and in all other fields of respiratory medicine (scientific, educational, administrative, managerial, and other).
- c Once more benefits have been put in place, develop and launch a marketing campaign, in Spanish and Portuguese, to publicize the benefits offered by ALAT to its active members.

3 Improve and build cooperative partnerships with other respiratory societies

- a Develop active and participatory involvement in the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) to benefit respiratory health in the region and around the world.
- b Promote relationships with national respiratory societies, through the Latin American Forum of Societies of Respiratory Medicine (FOLASOR), promoting collaborative actions and projects focused on management, education, and research.
- c Work on the construction of joint regional position papers on public health issues, such as smoking, vaping, environmental pollution, climate change, asbestos use, availability

of essential drugs and vaccines, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, and others.

4 Develop and implement the ALAT certification of excellence in Respiratory Medicine:

- a Create a system whereby any healthcare center or specific program can apply for and receive an ALAT certification of excellence in healthcare or technical expertise.

5 Participate in the public agenda for respiratory care in Latin America

- a Collaborate in developing the technical aspects needed to support the running of national societies in health and respiratory diseases in Latin America.
- b Generate position papers on current and relevant respiratory health issues and guidelines that support access and equity of diagnostic techniques and appropriate treatments for acute and chronic non-communicable respiratory diseases and disseminate them among international organizations responsible for health policies.
- c Build partnerships with academic institutions and the private sector that result in benefits for patient prevention, care, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- d Work with national societies and institutions to organize dedicated days and activities to raise awareness of particular respiratory diseases.

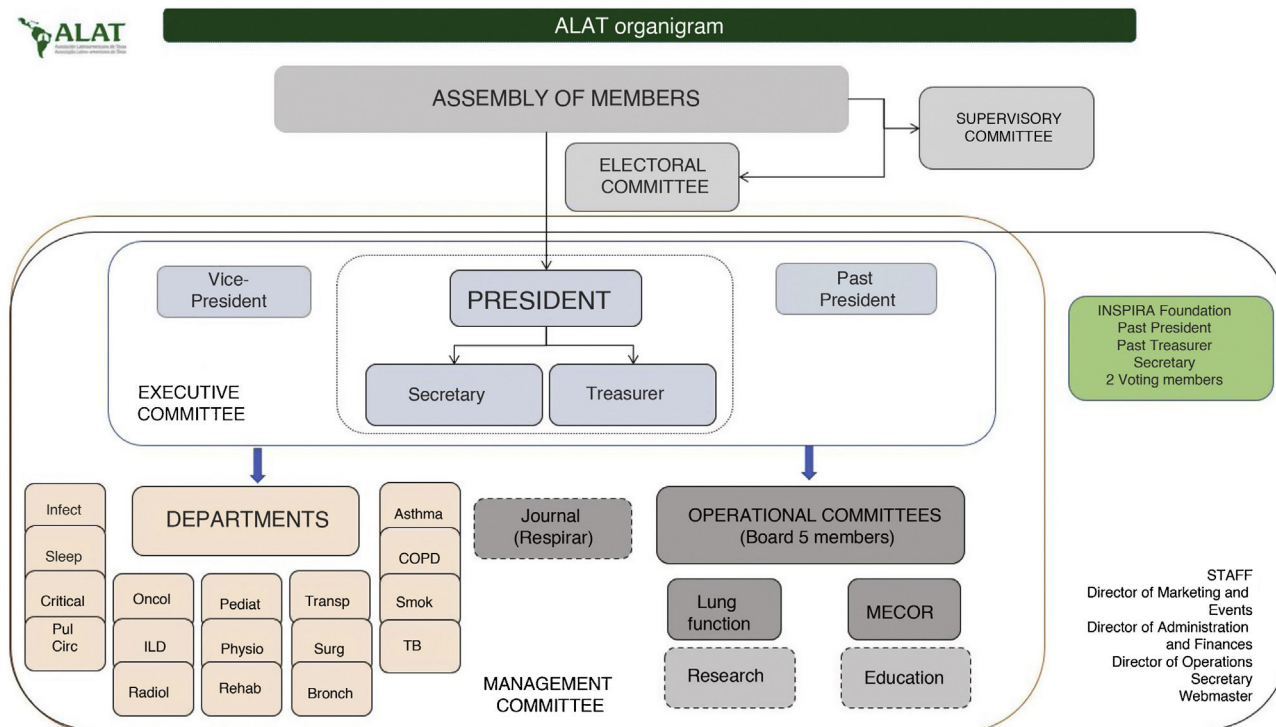


Figure 2. ALAT organigram.

6 Increase the number, participation, and dedication of ALAT members

- a Attract new members and retrieve lapsed members through optimal collaboration on a personal, individual level with national and international societies.
- b Encourage new students from postgraduate programs in respiratory diseases in Latin America to join ALAT.
- c Encourage professionals from other related medical specialties and other respiratory health professionals (physiotherapists, kinesiologists, nurses, and associated technical careers) to join ALAT.
- d Promote the development of research and education projects, and create and launch an educational grant open to ALAT members, sponsored by the INSPIRA Foundation.

7 Establish the ALAT Academy to regulate, coordinate and support the development of virtual and face-to-face educational activities of scientific departments

- a Create a permanent committee dedicated to defining the minimum curriculum for training programs in respiratory medicine specialties in Latin America.
- b Develop a formal, university-endorsed program to train ALAT members, primary care staff, technicians, and caregivers as respiratory medicine educators.
- c Collaborate with regional and international universities in developing virtual or face-to-face educational courses for ALAT members.
- d Extend training courses in respiratory diseases to general medicine practitioners, interns or residents, and specialists in respiratory medicine.
- e Promote access to short- and long-term fellowships in specialized centers worldwide.
- f Promote communications through social network channels to reach the general public, and patients and their caregivers in particular.

g Forge links with patient associations in different countries (asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis, and others), either directly or through local medical societies.

8 Help the journal RESPIRAR to gradually become in the mid-term one of the association’s official scientific organs of dissemination (“The Voice of ALAT”)

- a Set up the editorial committee of the journal RESPIRAR and help the editors develop their professional status.
- b Continue to develop ALAT’s own indexed scientific journal that will serve as an instrument to increase the opportunities for publication by Latin American researchers in both languages.
- c Attract original high-quality research papers for publication, develop the peer review process, produce regular issues, and achieve indexing in the main health science databases.
- d Continue to contribute original articles to Archivos de Bronconeumología.

9 Reactivate the Latin American Network for Research and Training in Respiratory Medicine (REDINLAT) for the training and effective integration of our centers and researchers, as follows:

- a Create the ALAT Research Committee to promote, organize, advise, supervise, and disseminate research, and set up an integrated, collaborative network of researchers, centers, or research groups (REDINLAT).
- b Consolidate the MECOR (Methods of Epidemiological, Clinical, and Operational Research) program in Latin America, with both online and face-to-face meetings, in the official languages of ALAT, to address the training of young regional researchers in respiratory medicine.
- c Conduct a census of regional training centers for respiratory medicine specialists, support countries that do not have such facilities, and strengthen existing centers.

10 Formalize and activate the functions of the ALAT INSPIRA Foundation

- a Organize the creation and implementation of a fund to support the development of research, education, and management projects for our national members and societies.
- b Attract benefactors of all kinds to support the Foundation's projects aimed at improving the care and quality of life of patients.

Conclusions

ALAT is striding ahead, and with teamwork, we will achieve the goals set out in this 5-year strategic plan.

References

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- Mark Cohen,^a Alejandro Casas,^b Gustavo Zabert,^c Carlos A. Torres-Duque,^d Francisco Arancibia,^{e,*} Rogelio Pérez-Padilla,^f Adrián Rendon,^g Santiago Guzmán,^h Karen Czischke,ⁱ María Montes de Oca,^j María Victorina López Varela,^k José Jardín,^l Juan Carlos Vázquez-García,^f Alfredo Guerreros Benavides,^m Miguel Ángel Bergna,ⁿ Carlos M. Luna,^o Lorena Noriega,^p Andrés Palomar Lever,^q José Miguel Chatkin^r
- ^a Hospital Centro Médico, Guatemala, Guatemala
^b Fundación Neumológica Colombiana, Escuela de Medicina y Ciencias de la Salud, Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá, Colombia
^c Clínica Pasteur, Universidad Nacional de Comahue, Neuquén, Argentina
- ^d Departamento de Investigación CINEUMO, Centro Internacional de Investigación en Neumología y Salud Respiratoria, Fundación Neumológica Colombiana, Universidad de la Sabana, Bogotá, Colombia
^e Servicio Medicina Respiratoria, Instituto Nacional de Tórax, Clínica Santa María, Santiago de Chile, Chile
^f Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Respiratorias Ismael Cosío Villegas (INER), Ciudad de México, Mexico
^g Hospital Universitario Dr. Eleuterio González, Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico
^h Hospital José Gregorio Hernández, Caracas, Venezuela
ⁱ Clínica Alemana, Hospital Padre Hurtado, Universidad del Desarrollo, Santiago de Chile, Chile
^j Hospital Universitario de Caracas, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela
^k Universidad de la República, Hospital Maciel, Montevideo, Uruguay
^l Escola Paulista de Medicina, Federal University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
^m Clínica Internacional, Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Peru
ⁿ Hospital del Tórax Dr. Antonio Cetrángolo, Vicente López, Buenos Aires, Argentina
^o Facultad de Medicina, Hospital de Clínicas, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina
^p Centro de Diagnóstico y tratamiento de enfermedades respiratorias CEDITER, Ciudad de Panamá, Panamá
^q Práctica Médica Grupal Neumología, Centro Médico ABC, Ciudad de México, Mexico
^r Escola de Medicina, Pontificia Universidade Católica de Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: fearancibia@gmail.com (F. Arancibia).