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Choosing Wisely

Decisiones Acertadas

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It is our privilege to be invited to write the editorial for this special edition of the Colombian Journal of Anesthesiology (CJA) and shed some light on the importance of the campaign and its impact in the anesthesiology practice.

The core principles of Choosing Wisely International (Decisiones Acertadas in Colombia) align very well with the global WHO/PAHO strategy of “integrated people-centred health services (IPCS)” as it spurs conversations between patients and their health providers. This global movement was launched in the United States by the ABIM foundation in 2012 with the aim to improve healthcare quality and reduce unnecessary treatments and tests. The foundation of the campaign rests on physician societies creating list of tests or treatments in their discipline for which there is excellent scientific evidence of overuse or harm to patients. Today, the campaign is active in over 25 countries around the world.

In Latin America, the campaign was adopted by Brazil in 2015 and was recently endorsed by its first Spanish speaking country, Colombia, in May 2022, thanks to the leadership of Dr. Ramon Abel Castaño and Dr. Lina Triana, President of the Colombian Association of Scientific Societies (ACSC), who teamed up with the first batch scientific societies to develop their own list of recommendations.

Within the five pioneer societies, the Colombian Society of Anesthesiology and Resuscitation (S.C.A.R.E.) has released the list of tests and treatments that are routinely used and that are not supported by evidence and that in turn could expose the patient or cause harm rather than good. Initiatives like removing unnecessary pre-operative testing in low-risk patients and improving the appropriateness of red cell blood cells and its components (i.e., fresh frozen plasma) should assist the society in adopting evidence-based anesthesiology protocols. On the other hand, the two other recommendations around pre-operative nutrition and supplemental oxygen therapy provide an excellent opportunity to improve pre-op patient preparedness, management, and treatment. In addition, they offer an opportunity for patients to get involved in their clinical treatment, discuss outcomes with their healthcare provider, and select alternative procedures or tests to avoid unnecessary harm.

It is with great pleasure that we applaud Decisiones Acertadas for the launching of the campaign in Colombia, congratulate SCARE for developing the list of recommendations, and encourage the anesthesiologist group in Colombia to consider these recommendations on their day-to-day practice and actively work with patients through a shared treatment decision process where the benefits and risks of the options are considered.