

The Iberoamerican Society of Neonatology (SIBEN): Twenty Years After Its Creation

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The Ibero-American Society of Neonatology (SIBEN), founded in 2004, is a non-profit international educational and academic organization formed by a group of pediatricians, neonatologists, nurses, and professionals of the interdisciplinary health team, including parents. It is registered as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization in the United States. This paper describes its objectives and many achievements from its beginnings to this year.

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Neonatal teaching, training, and outcomes have been very disparate in Spanish-speaking countries (1, 2), with poor and extremely variable indicators: 3,100 newborns (NBs) need neonatal care daily in Latin America; 15 NBs die every hour; 60% of deaths occur during the first 28 days of postnatal age.

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In 2004, the first Executive Board and Council of the Ibero-American Society of Neonatology (SIBEN) was formalized. An editorial in *Anales de Pediatría* reflected on this birth (1). The objectives were ambitious: to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of NBs and their families in Latin America by promoting continuing education with scientific and human foundations, supporting and

implementing educational programs for continuous improvement in the quality of neonatal care, developing guidelines for clinical practice, disseminate knowledge, promote collaborative research and develop an Ibero-American network of neonatal centers (1–3). SIBEN is a non-profit organization comprising pediatricians, neonatologists, nurses, and interdisciplinary health team professionals, including parents (2, 3). The philosophy set a precise course: promote, stimulate, improve, and facilitate the professional development of all neonatal staff to reduce the gap and disparity that exists between knowledge and daily clinical practice, with openness, diversity, and without elitism. Simply, “do well by doing good” (1–3).

SIBEN's mission remains solid and intact. SIBEN comprises professionals who collaborate voluntarily, without salaries, making up a management area (general director, operations and scientific director, and chancellor), an advisory body, and eleven councils with their respective chapters and part-time administrative support. More than 85 cents on the dollar goes directly to the mission, with minimal administrative costs. Furthermore, SIBEN does not own properties, vehicles, or offices. SIBEN has more than 1,000 active members in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela. SIBEN has established original and participatory educational initiatives to reduce the gap between the knowledge and the care that many NBs and their families receive (doing more of the same is not justified!). To achieve this, among other things, SIBEN provides incentives for education through various awards, scholarships, and subsidies to nurses and residents. In addition, it provides significant educational subsidies to professionals from countries with low dollar incomes. We are proudly reporting the trajectory, facts, activities, and collaborations of SIBEN twenty years after its creation.

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- a) Educational objectives: Table 1 shows some of SIBEN's educational modalities over the years, which by 2024 reached more than 7,000 neonatal health professionals.
- b) Implementation of continuous improvement in the quality of neonatal care: (for the sake of space, we mention only one example) Within the framework of an agreement between SIBEN and the National Health Service of the Dominican Republic, SIBEN based its face-to-face interventions on education and the implementation of valid strategies and actions. After two years of a multidimensional program in the field, neonatal mortality decreased from 17‰ to 12.1‰ (4).
- c) Objectives in disseminating clinical care guidelines: there is evidence that developing participatory consensus is valuable in promoting collaboration and the unification of diagnostic and therapeutic criteria. In 2007, Dr. Sola and Dr.

Golombek initiated the idea of developing "SIBEN Clinical Consensus." Table 2 shows the SIBEN Clinical Consensus published and disseminated since 2008, each based on the integration, collaboration, and interactive participation of 40 to 60 professionals from various countries. The methodology of each consensus is detailed and described in its publications. The final step is to reach conclusions based on the best existing evidence and prepare a document widely disseminated in the region. Likewise, by agreement with the Neonatology Section of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), some of them are published in NeoReviews in Spanish and available with free access (www.NeoReviews.org). More than 3,000 professionals have read each one.

- d) Research objectives: SIBEN's extensive scientific production is summarized in the references (21–35).

Table 1: Some examples of SIBEN's contributions to continuous and updated education

A. Dialoguing with SIBEN (started in 2014)	• Original and participatory educational modality for doctors and nurses • The process is initiated by request of a "local headquarters" through a group of professional active members of SIBEN • Since 2021: ○ Neonatal Dialogues in El Salvador (online modality): 300 web connections of professionals from El Salvador ○ Neonatal Dialogues in the Dominican Republic (hybrid modality): 300 attendees from 24 NICUs throughout the country).
B. Seminar 2021:	International Neonatal Intensive Care Seminar for Doctors and Nurses in the SIBEN Way, Córdoba, Argentina: 100 in-person attendees and 2,100 virtual attendees from all countries in the region (hybrid modality)
C. Courses through the EPA-SIBEN (Education to Advance) platform	a. Monitoring of brain and tissue oxygenation b. Critical reading of neonatal literature c. On-call in Neonatology d. Monitoring of the critically ill NBs for nursing and medicine e. Management of the ELBW in the first 72 hours of life
D. Interviews with experts	- "Everything we know and don't know about Neonatal Mechanical Ventilation" - "Everything we know and don't know about neonatal nutrition" - "How do we care for families in the NICU?" - "Debate in the SIBEN way - Controversies in Neonatology, pros and cons"
E. RESI-SIBEN and CUIDE-SIBEN videoconferences	a. How to look at an x-ray b. How to read an electrocardiogram in neonatology/ arrhythmias c. Evaluation of the newborn with genetic pathology d. Comprehensive neurodevelopment monitoring/assessment tools e. Neurodevelopment in the second year of life, how to evaluate and detect problems in a timely manner
F. SIBEN te invita (SIBEN invites you)	"COVID 19: The newborn and his mother in Bolivia"

Table 2: Clinical Consensus published by SIBEN (2008-2023) (all available at www.siben.net)	
2008	Diagnostic and therapeutic approach to the patent ductus arteriosus in preterm infants
2009	Hemodynamic management of the newborn
2010	Nutrition of the sick newborn (8)
2011	Neonatal hematology (9)
2012	Neonatal pain and sedation (10)
2013	Persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (11)
2014	Hypoxic- ischemic encephalopathy (12)
2015	Bronchopulmonary dysplasia (13)
2016	Early detection of diseases that cause neonatal hypoxemia through the use of pulse oximetry (14, 15)
2018	Suspicion of neonatal sepsis (16, 17)
2020	Nutrition of the healthy and sick newborns (18)
2021	Individualized care protocol of non-nutritive suction and use of pacifier in newborn <34 weeks gestational age (19)
2022	Neonatal transport (20)
2023	Transdisciplinary and humanized care for the newborn and their families (in press)

- e) Formation of a Neonatal Network: the SIBEN NETWORK allows us to objectively know the magnitude of neonatal problems by implementing a voluntary, systematized, and confidential registry of NBs from units in Latin America. Today, it has 21,500 NBs, including 13,500 preterm (with 2,500 <1,000 g and 4,600 1001–1500 g) and 8,000 term NBs. In 2021, 42 neonatal units participated, with data on 2,505 NBs ≤1500 g and/or ≤33 weeks and 3,541 NBs >1500 g and ≥34 weeks. These data make it possible to identify differences in the participating units, design strategies to collaborate in continuous improvement of the quality of care and carry out studies to establish a situational diagnosis of specific pathologies.
- f) SIBEN's role during the COVID-19 pandemic: during the last two years, SIBEN maintained an active role, accompanying and evaluating the efforts of the neonatal health team professionals, even in situations of crisis and uncertainty, such as those that have challenged the world. Since the beginning of this pandemic, SIBEN has disseminated updates on perinatal COVID-19 (36–41) and made a joint SIBEN-NeNe Foundation of Spain statement: “Risks to maternal and neonatal health in the midst of the COVID-19 viral pandemic” (42).
- g) International Congresses are held annually in various countries in Latin America, with prominent international speakers (see Table 3) and 1,500–2,800 assistants from nursing, medicine, and other disciplines who jointly participate and interact in several of the daily sessions.
- h) Neonatal Education Day was declared on September 12th to celebrate the importance of neonatal education in the quality of the survival rate of newborns.
- i) NEOFARMA SIBEN: An updated application for neonatal drug consultation is available free of charge to all members (5).

Table 3: SIBEN's Annual Conferences	
2004	Galápagos, Ecuador
2005	Isla Margarita, Venezuela
2006	Cancún, Mexico
2007	Granada, Spain
2008	Mar del Plata, Argentina
2009	Cuzco, Perú
2010	La Habana, Cuba
2011	Santiago, Chile
2012	Belo Horizonte, Brazil
2013	Cartagena de Indias, Colombia
2014	Mexico City, Mexico
2015	San José, Costa Rica
2016	Asunción, Paraguay
2017	Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia
2018	San Pedro Sula, Honduras
2019	Quito, Ecuador
2020	Córdoba, Argentina (virtual)
2022	Mérida, México
2023	Mar del Plata, Argentina
2024	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

- j) The Declaration of Family Rights (FAMIDERECHOS) was prepared and shared with the community (43).

Conclusions:

The Ibero-American Society of Neonatology (SIBEN) is an

international, non-profit educational and academic organization. In the last 20 years, a large part of the proposed objectives has been met and adapted to our region's emerging reality, maintaining presence and collaboration even during the pandemic, evidenced by the activities during 2020–2023. In addition to the International Congresses Annually, local activities are carried out through the Neonatal Dialogues, an in-person and innovative activity with interaction between teachers and participants that began in 2014. Nursing participation was and is key, as it occurs in healthcare.

As Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the Nobel Peace Prize 1979, said, "Without funds, there is no mission." SIBEN needs donations to continue functioning at these high levels. Donations can be made through its website: www.siben.net.

Unfortunately, neonatal health indicators in Latin America are still suboptimal and show disparity, which is why SIBEN continues working to ensure that "one newborn at a time," SIBEN improves their care and quality of life. Twenty years after its inception, SIBEN fulfills its founding mission: "doing good for ourselves, doing good for others." The path continues, and it is a path with heart.

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Respiratory Syncytial Virus

Really Serious Virus

Here's what you need to watch for this RSV season



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Coughing that gets worse and worse



Breathing that causes their ribcage to "cave-in"

Rapid breathing and wheezing



Bluish skin, lips, or fingertips

RSV can be deadly. If your baby has these symptoms, don't wait. Call your doctor and meet them at the hospital.



Thick yellow, green, or grey mucus



that clogs their nose and lungs, making it hard to breathe

Fever that is more than 101° Fahrenheit



which is especially dangerous for babies younger than 3 months

