

Expert Patient in self-care of rheumatic diseases program

PANLAR (1) and Juntos Group (2)

Background and aims

Because of the lack of specialist in the region, Pan American patients of RMDs don't have the access to a good quality education in their own self-care.

This project arose from the review of international programs developed by Stanford University (United Kingdom) and based on more than 10 years of experience implemented in Spain by the Universidad de los Pacientes. This type of programs is the subject of numerous international articles and has been identified as one of the strategies for success in dealing with the complexity of chronic diseases and the sustainability crisis of the healthcare system.

Methods

This course it is based on a structured handbook which includes a description of the activities of each session, including content details and methodology to be employed. The course is structured in six sessions, a 2.5-hour class per week, taught by two trainers, a patient or leader of patient organizations and a health professional.

1. The Pan American League of Associations of Rheumatology
2. Juntos Group is an academic committee represented by specialists from PANLAR and leaders of patient organizations part of ASOPAN, all representing the different areas of the Pan American region.



2019 - Training of multiplier expert patients

Classrooms of the Course for Expert Patients



Graduated Patients in September 2022



Pacientes Expertos Panamá



Tucumán - Argentina



La Plata - Argentina



Barranquilla - Colombia

Results

Specialists and leaders of patient organizations members of ASOPAN from 3 countries were chosen to be part of the pilot: 3 specialists and 3 patients from Argentina, 3 specialists and 3 patients from Panama, and 2 specialists and 2 patients from Colombia. They trained presencially and then spread the lessons in their own countries, training and helping another patients in their selfcare.

Conclusion

The Expert Patient Program promoted the formation of expert patient teams in self-care in 3 countries of our region. These expert patients are able to help other patients to control their RMDs and their health in a global way, contributing to expanding the quality and better management of RMDs.

This program is still under development and will be expanded to other Latin American countries in the future.