

Orientation Pack for Foreign Students at INFANT

infant



www.infant.org.ar



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Fundación Infant

Fundación INFANT (www.infant.org.ar) is a non-profit organization established in 2003 to translate laboratory findings into preventive and therapeutic medical interventions that promote pediatric health.



Mission

1. To generate scientific knowledge that improves pediatric health in Argentina and around the world.
2. To translate basic science observations into preventive and therapeutic medical interventions for children.
3. To train young researchers in biological and medical sciences in our country at the highest international level.

Areas of interest

Its main areas of Interest are:

- ❖ Basic and translational research and epidemiological studies in pediatric respiratory viruses
- ❖ Breastfeeding
- ❖ Asthma
- ❖ Other pulmonary diseases

Training programs

INFANT has several training programs, including doctoral and post-doctoral training for graduate and post-graduate students, an introduction to translational research for pediatricians (RIPRR-MinCyT) and training of foreign students in translational research (GU-INFANT).



At Fundación INFANT, biologists, biochemists, and pediatricians obtain their post graduate degrees according to international standards, funded by a variety of agencies including CONICET (National Council of Science and Technology), Thrasher, UBS/Optimus, and NIH.

Staff

Currently INFANT has a staff of 19 PhD students and post-doctoral fellows between pediatricians, biologists and biochemists, 30 second-third year pediatric residents enrolled in the RIPRR-MinCyT program, four associated faculty members with various projects in our main areas of interest, and numerous collaborative studies with US, European and Latin American institutions.

Locations

INFANT's home site is in Buenos Aires, but the foundation has stations in various states of Argentina, including Misiones (where we study dengue and respiratory diseases in tropical climate), Salta (where we study the effect of altitude in respiratory diseases), and Chaco (where we study the protective effect of donor breast milk in high-risk infants).



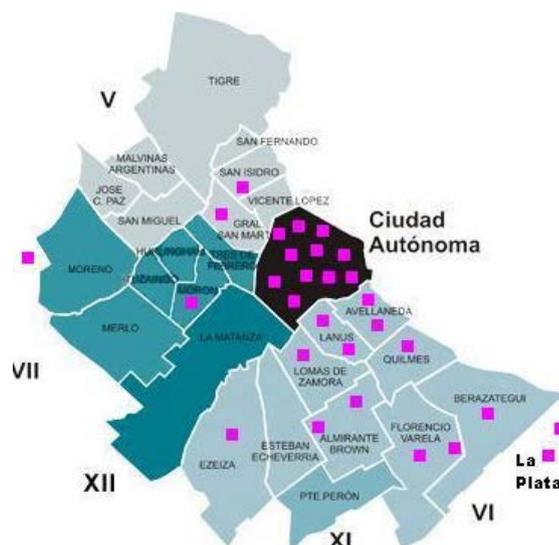
INFANT stations in Argentina



INFANT in Brazil

In addition, INFANT has strong ties to a novel twin organization in Porto Alegre, Brazil: INFANT Brazil, staffed by four pediatric pulmonologists trained in the US, Europe and Australia with whom the Buenos Aires team works in close collaboration including the submission and realization of joint research projects, and twice a year retreats to plan collaborations and review ongoing programs.

The foundation has past/ongoing projects in numerous pediatric hospitals or departments across Buenos Aires, including Hospital Evita Pueblo, Hospital Mi Pueblo, Hospital Posadas, Quilmes Hospital, Hospital Juan. P. Garrahan, Hospital Ramón Sardá, San Telmo 15 Health Center, Suizo Argentina Maternity Center, Otamendi Clinic, Trinidad Clinic, IMO Medical Institute, Hospital General Rodríguez, Hospital Durand, Hospital de Niños Sor Ludovica, Hospital de Niños Pedro de Elizalde, Hospital Materno Infantil San Isidro, Hospital Eva Perón, Hospital Militar Central, Hospital San Roque, and Hospital de Niños Ricardo Gutiérrez .



Hospitals involved in INFANT network.

Infant's accomplishments

In recent years, INFANT has produced important findings for pediatric respiratory diseases, exemplified by some projects listed below:

RSV disease in developing countries (funded by NIH (National Institutes of Health) and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)



Data from our laboratory and field studies suggest that a potential explanation for the enhanced severity of RSV illness in poor nations is increased exposure of infants to bacterial endotoxin (LPS), associated with lack of sewage, dirt floors, crowding, presence of animals in the homes, and contaminated water (Serra ME et al. Nat Med, in review). While current public health interventions do not affect RSV severity rates (in fact, rates continue to increase), studying and implementing novel, creative interventions to decrease LPS exposure in underserved populations may affect bronchiolitis severity.

As an additional important problem, the burden of illness and mortality of RSV infection in the developing world is unknown. Fifteen public hospitals from the Peds TRTP-Argentina region are initiating with VUMC and INFANT a large study in a catchment population of 220,000 extremely poor children to better understand the impact of this illness and identify modifiable risk factors.

Protecting the most vulnerable infants against RSV (funded by NIH & private donors; grant in review at Thrasher Research Fund)

Very low birth weight (VLBW) infants are very susceptible to RSV infection, with 58% hospitalization and 19% ventilation rates (Klein et al. J Infect Dis 06). Administration of a commercially-available preventive humanized monoclonal antibody against the virus (palivizumab) is seldom possible in public institutions because of cost constraints. Yet, one of our projects in the region



participating in Peds TRTP-Argentina demonstrated that breastfed girls are resistant to acute respiratory infections (hospitalization rate for ARI=6%; RSV-mediated hospitalizations=0), while non-breastfed VLBW girls are particularly susceptible to disease (50% hospitalizations with ARI; 100% hospitalization in our cohort in those infected with RSV) (Klein MI et al. Pediatr 06). A more moderate, but similar effect was observed in males (Libster R et al. PIDJ 08). Therefore, we reasoned that supplementing non-breastfed VLBW infants with donor breast milk could provide

protection to non-breastfed infants against respiratory infections and decrease the impact of RSV and other agents in this high-risk group. For this purpose, we established a Breast Milk Bank to evaluate the protective efficacy of pasteurized donor breast milk against respiratory infections in a double-blinded, placebo (formula)-controlled trial in VLBW infants. These studies accessed funding from local pharmaceutical companies, private donors, Argentinean foundations and the NIH. If results prove attractive, practice could be generalized in the region at low cost.

The role of RIPRR-MinCyT in characterizing the pediatric impact of pandemic influenza (funded by MinCyT & private donors)



Pandemic influenza affected Argentina early during the Southern Hemisphere winter in 2009 and resulted in 10-fold higher mortality rates in children than seasonal flu viruses. Through our RIPRR-MinCyT, we characterized the clinical and laboratory manifestations and high-risk groups for 2009 H1N1 pandemic influenza within three months of the initiation of the pandemic in the Southern Hemisphere. This work was submitted for publication in August 2009, providing early criteria for public health interventions against this threat (Libster R et al. N Engl J Med 2010). A follow-up study during the 2010 winter in the same catchment population of 1 million children revealed no hospitalizations due to 2009 H1N1 and is now in press (Libster R et al. N Engl J Med 2010, in press), predicting a mild season for 2010-2011 in the Northern Hemisphere. These examples – describing studies conducted by RIPRR in the same region selected for Peds TRTP-Argentina - illustrate the immense value of a well-organized network of physician scientists for the definition of certain public health policies.

Antioxidants and chronic lung disease in VLBW infants (funded by NIH)

In recent years, survival of VLBW infants in developing countries created novel challenges for pediatric clinical services. VLBW infants often require several weeks of mechanical ventilation and oxygen supplementation in early life, and consequently develop chronic lung changes known as bronchopulmonary dysplasia. The disease results from arrested development of the lung in the canalicular and sacular phase, and has been associated



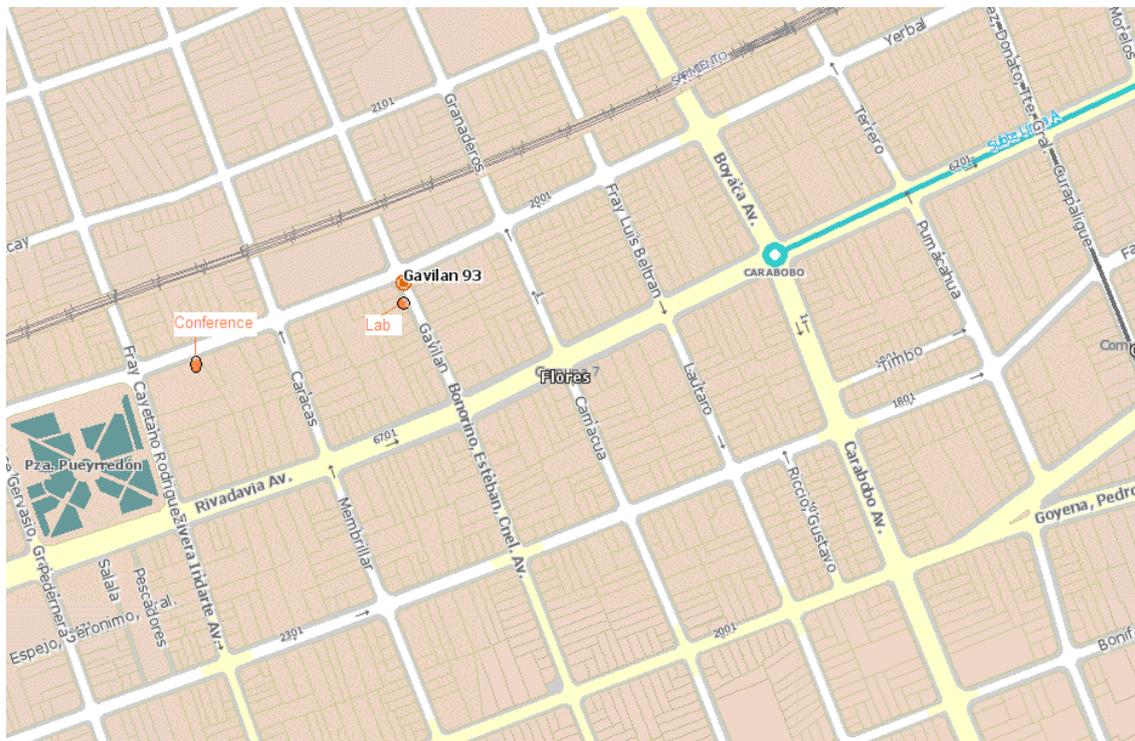
with oxidative stress. Five institutions in our current RIPRR-MinCyT Network are conducting an observational study in 1,200 triads led by VUMC-INFANT in collaboration with NIEHS (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences) to identify antioxidant genes associated with disease susceptibility. Potential interventions to decrease oxidative stress through antioxidant gene activation (using sulforophan, a broccoli derivative) may contribute to *decrease the rates of chronic lung*

disease in developing countries should antioxidant genes prove important in disease susceptibility.



These and other projects highlight the scope and potential impact of an active and highly professionalized network of translational research stations to define interventions that can improve pediatric health in industrialized and developing countries.

Facilities



- ❖ Office and animal facilities:
Gavilán 93 – 4634-0060/0070 # 109 and 111
Wifi pwd: 1969119691
- ❖ Lab:
Gavilán 94 – 4634-0060/0070 # 107
Wifi pwd: *120569/*
- ❖ Conference room:
Yerbal 2354 – 4637- 4169
Wifi pwd: 19691

Contact

Administration

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Argentina

General Information

Climate

Argentina is located in the southern hemisphere, where seasons are the opposite to the northern hemisphere.



March, the beginning of autumn, is the ideal time to visit any place in the country. At this time the weather in the city of Buenos Aires is warm, humid and a bit rainy, and the temperature starts going down, being generally in the range between 11°C (52°F) and 25°C (77°F).

In general, summer, with mild temperatures and long days, is the most favorable season to travel across Patagonia and the meridional Andes. Winter is the recommended season to travel along the north, northeast and northwest areas because rains are less frequent and subtropical temperatures decrease some degrees. Autumn and spring are very favourable in Cuyo, La Rioja and Catamarca pre-cordilleran areas and in Buenos Aires.

Electricity

In our country the electric system is 220 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz. If you have electric appliances for 110 volts, you can purchase adaptors in specialized stores.

Money



In Argentina the currency is the PESO (\$). There are bills of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 pesos and coins of 2 pesos and 1 peso and 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 cents.

Tips

As in many other countries, in Argentina it is customary to leave a tip of 10% of the consumption in bars, cafes and restaurants. It is also usual to tip doormen, porters, concierges and hotel attendants and also attendants in cinemas, theatres and shows.

Telephone Booths



Everywhere in the country there are telephone booths from where you can make domestic or international calls, where calls have to be paid cash. Some have fax services and access to Internet and special booths for ear-impaired people.

Banks and Stores Opening Times



Banks and Exchange Houses: Mondays – Fridays 10 am to 3 pm

Commercial/Trade Offices: Generally 9 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm.

Shops and stores: In big cities, 9 am to 8 pm, although in the interior of the country they use to close at noon. On Saturdays, opening time is 9 am to 1 pm. Shopping malls and big stores are open the 7 days of the week from 10 am to 10 pm.

Cafés, bars and pizza parlours: They are almost always open except between 2 am and 6 am.

Restaurants

Lunch is served as of 12 pm and dinner as of 8 pm. Nevertheless, there are many places where you can get fast food served at any time. These opening times may be different depending on the province.

Airports



International Ezeiza Airport "Ministro Pistarini"

Inaugurated in 1949, it is the international terminal of excellence in the Argentine Republic as it concentrates 80% of the country's international air traffic.

Address: Autopista Ricchieri, Km. 33,5. Ezeiza, Province of Buenos Aires.
Telephone – information:(54–11) 5480–6111.



“Jorge Newbery” Airport

It is located in the northwestern area of the City of Buenos Aires. It holds mainly domestic flights, and in a lesser degree, international flights to the República Oriental del Uruguay. It is the airport with most passengers in transit.

Address: Av. Rafael Obligado S/N. (1425) Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires.
Telephone – information: (54–11) 5480–6111.

Tax Return

Foreign tourists can request the VAT (Value Added Tax) return for the purchase of products manufactured in Argentina for a value of not less than seventy Argentine pesos (\$70). To apply for this tax return, products have to be purchased in stores adhered to this system, which show the “TAX FREE Shopping” logo.



When purchasing any product, tourists have to request the seller an original Invoice "B" category or ticket "B" category, and the "Global Refund Check". Before departing from Argentina, tourists shall submit the products purchased, the invoice or ticket and the Refund Check to the Customs Office. To know the amount to be refunded or further information on this respect, please contact the Tax Revenue Office (AFIP).

US Embassy in Argentina

Address: Av. Colombia 4300. (C1425GMN). C.A.B.A.

E-mail: BuenosAires-ACS@state.gov

Internet: <http://argentina.usembassy.gov>

Telephone: (54) (11) 5777-4533

For Emergency services only: (54)(11) 5777-4354

After hours emergencies: (54)(11) 5777-4873

Fax: (54)(11) 5777-4293 (54)(11) 5777-4205

Safety Recommendations

Crime

Most U.S. citizens visit Argentina without incident. Nevertheless, street crime in the larger cities, especially greater Buenos Aires and Mendoza, is a problem for residents and visitors alike. As in any big city, visitors to Buenos Aires and popular tourist destinations should be alert to muggers, pickpockets, scam artists, and purse-snatchers on the street, in hotel lobbies, at bus and train stations, and in cruise ship ports. Thieves regularly nab unattended purses, backpacks, laptops, and luggage, and criminals will often distract visitors for a few seconds to steal valuables.



Don't wear expensive watches or jewelry or carry laptop computer cases in order not to become a target for thieves.



Be especially careful in the La Boca neighborhood (home to the famous “Caminito” street and the “La Boca” soccer stadium) in Buenos Aires, where violent robberies have been occurring with increasing frequency. Tourists who go to La Boca should limit their visit to the designated tourist areas during daylight hours.



Important

Criminals usually work in groups, and travelers should assume they are armed.

While most U.S. citizens are not physically injured when robbed, criminals are known to use force when they encounter resistance.

Visitors are advised to immediately hand over all cash and valuables if confronted.

Criminals employ a variety of ruses to distract and victimize unsuspecting visitors:

- ❖ A common scam is to spray mustard or a similar substance on the tourist from a distance. A pickpocket will then approach the tourist offering to help clean the stain, and while doing so, he or an accomplice robs the victim.
- ❖ Another scam is to entice tourists into a bar known as a “wiskeria” with a flyer for a shopping discount or free show. Once inside, the victim is not allowed to leave until he or she pays an exorbitant amount for a drink.

- ❖ Some travelers have received counterfeit currency in Argentina. Unscrupulous vendors and taxi drivers sometimes pretend to help tourists review their pesos, then trade bad bills for good ones.



Important

Travelers worldwide are advised to avoid packing valuables in their checked baggage. In Argentina, officials have publicly acknowledged the systematic theft of valuables and money from checked baggage at Buenos Aires airports.

Authorities are working to resolve the problem and have made a number of arrests, but travelers should exercise continued care and caution.



Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, you may be breaking local law as well.

Your passport is a valuable document and should be guarded. Passports and other valuables should be locked in a hotel safe, and a photocopy of your passport should be carried for identification purposes. The U.S. Embassy has observed an increase in reports of stolen passports in the past years.



The Argentine Federal Police have established a special Tourist Police Unit to receive complaints and investigate crimes against tourists.

The unit, located at Corrientes 436 in Buenos Aires, responds to calls around the clock at 4346-5748 or toll-free 0800-999-5000 from anywhere in the country.

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in the city of Buenos Aires or in the surrounding Province of Buenos Aires is 911 for police assistance.

In the city of Buenos Aires, dial 100 in case of fire and 107 for an ambulance. In the Province of Buenos Aires, fire and ambulance numbers vary by location.

Traffic and Transportation

- ❖ Pedestrians and drivers should exercise caution, as drivers frequently ignore traffic laws and vehicles often travel at excessive speeds. The rate and toll of traffic accidents has been a topic of much local media attention.
- ❖ Protesters on occasion block streets, highways, and major intersections, causing traffic jams and delaying travel. While demonstrations are usually nonviolent, hooligans in some of the groups sometimes seek confrontation with the police and vandalize private property. Groups occasionally protest in front of the U.S. Embassy and U.S.-affiliated businesses.



Important

U.S. citizens should take common-sense precautions and avoid gatherings or any other event where crowds have congregated to protest. Information about the location of possible demonstrations is available from a variety of sources, including the local media.

- ❖ Domestic flight schedules can be unreliable. Occasional work stoppages, over-scheduling of flights and other technical problems can result in flight delays, cancellations, or missed connections. Consult local media for information about possible strikes or slow-downs before planning travel within Argentina.
- ❖ Public transportation is generally reliable and safe. The preferred option for travel within Buenos Aires and other major cities is by radio taxi or "remise" (private car with driver). The best way to obtain safe taxis and remises is to call for one or to go to an established stand, rather than hailing one on the street. Hotels, restaurants, and other businesses can order remises or radio taxis, or provide phone numbers for such services, upon request.



Important

Passengers on buses, trains, and the subway should be alert for pickpockets and should also be aware that these forms of transport are sometimes interrupted by strikes or work stoppages.

Tourism

Argentina's mountains, forests, deserts, and glaciers make it a popular destination for outdoor and adventure sports enthusiasts. Despite the best efforts of local authorities, assisting visitors lost or injured in such remote areas can be difficult. U.S. citizens have died in recent years while mountain climbing, skiing, trekking, and hunting in Argentina.



Important

Travelers visiting isolated and wilderness areas should learn about local hazards and weather conditions and always inform park or police authorities of their itineraries. Reports of missing or injured persons should be made immediately to the police so that a search can be mounted or assistance rendered.

Argentina boasts the highest peak outside of the Himalayas, Mount Aconcagua. Its guidebook billing as affordable and "requiring no climbing skills" attracts hundreds of Americans every year.



Important

Inexperienced mountaineers should bear in mind that Aconcagua's 22,840-foot altitude, bitter cold, and savage storms make it, in fact, one of the world's most difficult climbs.