

Presence of anaesthetists in intensive care medicine in Spain

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Sir: I read with interest the new paper of the CoBatriCE collaboration [1]. The situation of Intensive Care Medicine (ICM) in Spain has not changed since our first publication of the CoBatriCE collaboration in 2004 [2], so it is difficult to understand the different information provided in the new article.

The paper does not reflect the simple, so-called “complexity of the Spanish situation”. The Spanish reality is shown in a 2008 survey of 105 teaching hospitals in Spain (unpublished data from the Ministry of Health):

- Primary intensivists have 2,043 ICU beds in 99 hospitals. Only eight teaching hospitals have exclusively primary ICU beds, with no anaesthesia ICU beds.
- Anaesthesia intensivists have 1,455 ICU beds in 97 hospitals (we do not consider 1,572 additional PACU beds). Six teaching hospitals have exclusively anaesthesia ICU beds that provide both medical and surgical intensive care, with no primary ICU beds.
- Nineteen teaching hospitals have 5 or fewer anaesthesia ICU beds, but 78 hospitals have 6 or more anaesthesia ICU beds, and 30 hospitals have equal or more anaesthesia- than primary ICU beds.

So Anaesthesia has 41.6% of ICU beds in Spain, although we do not take into account ICU beds governed by cardiologists, surgeons, etc.

Table 1 of the paper does not give a real view of the situation of Spain: the speciality status of ICM in Spain is also a “Single-sub Speciality” with “Certification Specialist Training: Alone, Joint”. And Table 2 needs to include Spain as a “Multiple modes of access: Spain (modes 3, 4). 5 countries”.

Spanish primary-intensivist trainees spend 2 years of rotations in Medicine (outside of the ICU) and 3 years in the ICU with 1 month of Anaesthesia rotation (a maximum of 32 months in the ICU) [3], and they are legally allowed to work only in ICM in Spain.

Spanish anaesthesia trainees spend 1 year of rotation in Medicine, and between 3 and 12 months in the ICU during their training (in the 3rd or 4th year) [4], and they are legally allowed to work both in the operating room and in the ICU as they do.

Information about ICM in Spain can not ignore the presence and work of anaesthesia intensivists.

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