

Spotlight on Spain



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Spain has excelled this year in their contribution to the EACTS Quality Improvement Programme (QUIP). Spanish centres have joined forces, with the cooperation of the SECTCV (Sociedad Española de Cirugía Torácica-Cardiovascular), and are contributing data to the EACTS QUIP Adult Cardiac Database (ACD). This is known locally as QUIP Spain.

“The feedback has been very positive... I see QUIP Spain progressing quickly to become the ‘National registry’”

All contributing hospitals send their cardiac surgical dataset to the Spanish QUIP Registry, and from there, individual hospital data are forwarded to the EACTS QUIP ACD in Birmingham, UK. In January 2016, the Spanish QUIP Registry, located at the Hospital University A Coruña, Spain, was established and a team of surgeons and a data manager oversee the process. The contributing units can now make use of the EACTS QUIP resources for benchmarking purposes and research on an international scale.

This is a leading example of centres cooperating on a national basis and contributing to a supranational database, with consistent and accurate data. An annual meeting in Madrid, organised by the SECTCV for Spanish cardiac surgical units, was held in January of this year to review the Spanish QUIP Registry.

Rafael Sádaba and **Carlos Velasco** play a key role in QUIP Spain, and have agreed to a special EACTS interview to shed light on Spain's experience in the last year since joining QUIP, and unveil future plans of turning the QUIP into a national registry for Spain...

What is the EACTS QUIP ACD and how did Spain get involved?

Rafa: In Spain, the EACTS QUIP database or QUIP Spain as it is known locally, has been proposed to become the Spanish national registry. It will take the place of the traditional national registry, which has been in operation for over 30 years. The involvement was by serendipity. The Spanish Society of Thoracic-Cardiovascular Surgery decided to develop a patient-based registry some years ago and it was working towards creating it. It was in this context that it was suggested, instead of developing a whole new database, we could take advantage of joining the European registry, which had recently been designed and developed by the Quality and Outcomes Research Unit (QuORU) in Birmingham, UK, a centre of excellence in these matters.

What is your current role in the QUIP ACD?

Carlos: In January 2016, the SECTCV started QUIP Spain with the aim of developing a national database fully compatible and containing all the variables of the EACTS QUIP ACD. All the hospitals in Spain performing cardiac surgery were invited to join to this project. This national database works as an intermediate step to collect, validate and analyse the data before it is sent to the EACTS QUIP database. My task, working along with Rafa Sádaba, Jose Joaquin Cuenca Castillo (Past-President of the SECTCV), Pedro Lima and Cristina Quiñones (data manager of the QUIP project in Spain), has been to develop this national database, defining the recommended variables to include and to give assistance to all the cardiac surgery departments in Spain in the task of sending their data to QUIP Spain.

Since the launch of the SECTCV contribution to the QUIP ACD in January 2016, how many hospitals have signed up?

Carlos: The EACTS QUIP ACD has been very well accepted by the different cardiac surgery departments. So far **27 hospitals** have signed up to QUIP Spain and to date 19 departments have already sent their data to the EACTS QUIP ACD, representing many of the largest cardiac surgery departments in Spain. The remaining hospitals that have not yet signed up are expected to become part of the project within the next year.

What benefits are there to joining the QUIP ACD?

Rafa: I see three significant benefits:

1. Allows for benchmarking against other European centres, permitting hospitals to identify areas of strength and weakness.
2. Allows those sending data to the QUIP, to use the database to carry out studies and research.
3. Access to the clinical support tool, which allows you to find statistics for a population matching a specific criteria.

Carlos: The QUIP ACD gives the cardiac departments the opportunity of benchmarking their outcomes with other hospitals in Europe, identify areas of improvement and share data among different groups.



“I must say, both support teams in Birmingham and at the Hospital A Coruña have done a fantastic job.”

Were there any difficulties at first matching the centres' database to the QUIP ACD?

Rafa: There were indeed some difficulties. For starters, there was the language barrier (Spanish vs English). Different centres had different local databases, and often, items in those databases were not matched against QUIP, or the variables and outcomes were measured with different metrics.

How were they overcome?

Rafa: We liaised closely with the support team in Birmingham for the translation of all the items in the QUIP dataset into Spanish. This dataset was then adopted by the centres contributing to QUIP Spain in close collaboration with the QUIP Spain team at A Coruña. I must say that both support teams in Birmingham and A Coruña have done a fantastic job.

The QUIP ACD is more than just a registry – it has beneficial features, including a benchmarking tool, data analysis, and a clinical support tool.

How much do centres use the QUIP tools?

Rafa: I think all that the QUIP ACD offers is the great unknown in the registry. In a recent meeting in Madrid to discuss



the QUIP, it was clear that the message had not got through and most centres had not used it enough. More effort is needed to spread the word of its capabilities and make it more user-friendly.

Spain has progressed enormously in the past year with the QUIP, contributing 19.47% of the data currently in the ACD.

“Joining the QUIP Project is really easy thanks to the invaluable help of the QUIP team”

Why, in your opinion, has QUIP taken off so well in Spain?

Carlos: The SECTCV has always been very concerned about the necessity of analysing the outcomes of the national

cardiac surgery departments to achieve best clinical practice, and has adopted the QUIP project as its own, leading the developing of the new national database (QUIP Spain) on the basis of the EACTS QUIP project. This has facilitated the access to the QUIP for hospitals across Spain.

“All hospitals agreed on the importance of the information obtained with the QUIP Tool and the simplicity of its use”

An annual meeting organised by the SECTCV in Madrid, Spain, took place with the Spanish surgical units. What was the overall feedback regarding the QUIP tool?

Carlos: At the SECTCV annual meeting we received very good feedback from the hospitals sending their data to the QUIP ACD. All the hospitals agreed on the importance of the information obtained with the QUIP tool and the simplicity of its use. Moreover, the delegates of the registry from each department emphasised the good assistance and quick response by the QUIP team to any problems or doubts they experienced.

Rafa: The feedback has been very positive. A large proportion of centres have signed the agreement to join the QUIP and are preparing their databases to submit data in the near future. One of the difficulties identified was the problems that some IT departments were finding to introduce a new database in the centre.

How do you see the progression of QUIP in Spain's future?

Rafa: I see QUIP Spain progressing quickly over the next 2 years to becoming the ‘national registry’. For this to happen, all centres must get their databases in line with the QUIP dataset.

Carlos: For sure the remaining hospitals that have still not joined the QUIP project will join in the coming months. The quick and progressive acceptance of the QUIP project in Spain suggests that this project will become the national database within the next 2 years.

What advice would you give to centres in other countries thinking about joining the QUIP?

Carlos: The QUIP ACD is a very effective instrument for benchmarking our outcomes and is much more powerful the more hospitals join the project, so we encourage all the cardiac surgery departments concerned with the importance of achieving best clinical practice and the best outcomes to join to the QUIP project.

Joining this project is really easy thanks to the invaluable help of the QUIP team who guide you through the process. Joining the QUIP ACD as a country has the additional advantage of developing a national database available for further research.

The main problem we have found joining the QUIP has been to adapt our variables to the QUIP variables, since the categories were not exactly the same. Nevertheless, only minor changes were needed since the mandatory and highly recommended variables did not differ much for the common categories used for estimating risks with the most used risk scores, and thus these variables and categories are common within the current databases.

Rafa: Joining the QUIP, either as an individual centre or as a nation, has many advantages as already discussed. Adapting an existing database to the QUIP dataset can take time and effort in the beginning, but any problems may be easily overcome by liaising closely with the QUIP support team.



To join the EACTS QUIP,
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