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INTERVIEW WITH DR. PATRICIA PORTO, CHIEF OF SAN ISIDRO RACECOURSE DOPING CONTROL LABORATORY AND CO-CHAIR OF OSAF ANALYSTS, VETERINARIANS AND EQUINE WELFARE COMMITTEE IN HER PARTICIPATION AT THE ICRAV 2023 IN HONG KONG



From September 17th till 23rd, in Hong Kong, the 23th International Conference of Racing Analysts and Veterinarians (ICRAV) took place. OSAF was represented by Dr. Patricia Porto, Chief of the Doping Control Laboratory at San Isidro Racecourse and co-Chair of OSAF Analysts, Veterinarians and Equine Welfare Committee.

We share with the readers of OSAF News the interview with Dr. Porto.

1. How many ICRAV meetings have you attended? Amongst those in which you participated, what is your appreciation and which were the topics that most drew your attention?

The first ICRAV meeting I attended was held in Antalya (Turkey) in 2008, then in 2016 in Montevideo (Uruguay) and then in Dubai in 2020. Now, after 5 years, the ICRAV was again carried out, and this time in Hong Kong in 2023. For the members of AORC (Association of Official Racing Chemists) three assemblies were convened: the AORC Annual General

Meeting, the AORC American Section Meeting and the AORC Closing Business Meeting. In short, these meetings provide the members a review of everything that has been carried out by AORC's different committees during the term, and also, the future actions to be taken within the organization are defined. Topics of interest are discussed, the change of authorities in the organization's Board take place, and a global review on doping control is also addressed. In the section of the Americas there is a predominant participation of members from the USA.

I believe that, in order to achieve a better integration of South America into the Committee, it would be a good thing to enhance the communications of the activities being carried out and to have the possibility of having virtual sessions or meetings. The upcoming Annual Meeting of AORC will be held in Chicago (USA) in September 2024, and I think it's necessary to increase the participation of South American chemists in order to display the work being carried out.

The week of meetings in Hong Kong has been particularly intense, given that after the 5-year break a great number of data was compiled, and we had 8 analytical sessions, 5 joint sessions and a poster session which was a clear indicator of the work carried out during the last term at a global scale.

The joint meetings addressed topics related mainly to the sustainability in horseracing, social licence, the importance of doping control and related legal issues.

Traditional topics such as pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics of substances were addressed, as well as developing issues such as gene doping control, which strongly arose on the occasion of ICRAV 2018 and keeps ongoing in 2023.

A new topic for our activity, although it's also being used in other sports, is the work being done on the biological passport.

2. How do you see the development accomplished in other regions, regarding your area of interest? Where has the main focus been placed upon?

There is a growing interest on control, which is regarded as a fundamental tool to ensure the integrity of horseracing. There is also an increasing concern on gene doping, which for the time being has more to do with being able to detect it, rather than being sure it is being performed.

The biological passport is a means of control, not for the direct control on the substance used but for the modification of individual parameters, but it is currently highly expensive and does not look like something that may be applied as general practice. As regards the equipment, techniques such as LCMSMS (Liquid Chromatography coupled with Mass Spectrometry) are being maintained, while the growing technique is HRMS (High Resolution Mass Spectrometry), and lesser tests are being performed by using GCMS (Gas Chromatography coupled with Mass Spectrometry) - except from the determination of alkalizing substances, for which the new technique is based on Headspace- GCMS (which is the test for volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds).

3. How do you regard the progress made by San Isidro Racecourse Laboratory since 2016, the year in which the ICRAV was first carried out in our region (in Montevideo)?

Since ICRAV 2016 in Montevideo, the Laboratory of Doping Control in San Isidro racecourse has doubled its premises and staff. Two of the analysts within its staff are members of AORC. Training internships were carried out at the LCH laboratory in France, and we actively participate in ICRAV meetings by presenting research works related to topics of interest for our region.

Our laboratory has purchased new, more sensitive equipment, work been carried out to modify analytical techniques, and also new substances have been added to the screening methods. We have introduced a ICP-OES (Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectrometer,) which determines the amount of certain elements present within a sample, and this allows us to search for the presence of Arsenic and Cobalt in routine tests. Also, we began performing out of competition tests for runners entered for Group 1 races.

4. As Chief of San Isidro Laboratory, what are your challenges for the next 2 years, as regards amount of samples being tested, types of substances, amongst others?

With all the progress being made in the past few years, our laboratory is prepared to perform tests on 10,000 samples yearly. In the next 2 years we expect to achieve and outstand the number of samples tested in the region, which will allow us to have stronger support for further development. One of the goals to achieve within the next 2 years is to be able to purchase a High Resolution Chromatograph. The introduction of new substances and the validation of analytical techniques is a permanent goal of doping control laboratories. The development of techniques to test hair samples for the presence of drugs is another goal to achieve.

Dr. Patricia Porto has presented 2 posters at the relevant scientific sessions in ICRAV 2023 in Hong Kong:

- ★ Two fundamental tools to prevent Cobalt misuse: control and education.
- ★ Could Argentina Racing Rules use a urinary threshold of 300ng/mL?

The two presentations are available in OSAF official website, through the following links:

www.osafweb.com.ar/wp-content/uploads/afiche_arsenico_LQJCA_ICRAV_A0.pdf
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