**ISA ISPID  
  
Abstract Submission  
  
Nº: 215**

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| Topics: SIDS |
| Type: **Oral** |
| **Unexpected death in infancy.  591 cases from Uruguay** |
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| **Introduction** In Uruguay the majority of infant deaths occurs at home without medical care. In August 2009 a law to study cases of unexpected death in infancy (N° 18.537) was approved. The autopsies are performed by the forensic physician together with the pediatric pathologist. All known obvious trauma cases are excluded. Objective: to know the causes of death of the population under study.  **Material and Methods** Autopsies between October 1998 and December 2015 were analyzed. There was a free interval (2002 to 2006). The cases were assessed with studies that included radiography, photos, toxicology, vitreous humor chemistry, cultures and virology (with molecular biology included); the body and organ measurements were registered; macroscopic and complete microscopic examination were done. In selected cases, genetic tests were also performed. The clinical records were gathered, the circumstances of death investigated and the family was interviewed by a physician and a psychologist. The cases were discussed in a multidisciplinary team.  **Results** 591 cases were examined. 412 cases (69,7%) were <4months old; 90 cases were newborns (15,2%). 167 cases (28%) were between 4 and 12 months old. 12 cases (2%) were older tan one year. 343(58%) were boys and 248 (42%) were girls. In 87% the weight at birth was ≥2000g; 13% ≤2000g; 5% ≤1500g. Maternal age was recorded in 430 cases; 61% were between 20 and 35 years old; 31% were ≤19 years and 8% were older tan 35 years. Examination of socioeconomic status was possible in 497cases. It was low in 73% of them. A cause of death was identified in 339 cases (57%). In 252 cases it was undetermined (43%). A respiratory infection was found in 29% of the autopsies (50% of the explained deaths). A cardiac anomaly was found in 15%; dehydration secondary to diarrhea in 4,5%; suffocation in 3%; a violent cause was identified in 1,5%. There were variations between both periods (1998-2001 and 2007-2015).  **Conclusions** The study allowed to improve the knowledge of causes of death in infancy. It provided the authorities with local references to reduce infant mortality. Educational activities with the medical community, and information to the family and the community were possible. The approval of the law was very important.   \* *Professor and Director of Pediatric Pathology. Hospital Pereira Rossell. Laboratorio de Patología Pediátrica. Montevideo. Uruguay* |
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