

IAEA has recently estimated that the shortage of qualified clinical medical physicists in Latin America is about 400 specialists, similar to the estimated 500 physicists currently working in hospitals in the region. The explanation for this situation is multi-factorial: lack of appropriate educational and training programs, absence of formal recognition of the profession by labor and regulatory authorities, low salaries, poor recognition of the profession by colleague physicists, insufficient understanding of the abilities and responsibilities of this specialist, among others. In recent years, there has been an increase in the creation of educational programs, from the Bachelor to the Doctorate level, which has helped to alleviate the numerical shortage. However, these academic programs cannot satisfy the requirements of an appropriate clinical training, due to restrictions in the duration of the curricular program as well as practical difficulties of an activity which requires a clinical environment. The few existing hospital training programs can hardly deal with the needs. This talk will review the situation in the region and will focus on the needs related to the professional certification.