

# LatAm Healthcare Pulse

Key data and perspectives on **patient care**

## Argentina

GHI has been monitoring health care trends in Latin America throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Our team of analysts and in-country experts interview physicians, surgeons, hospital medical staff, as well as importers, distributors, and procurement specialists on a regular basis to understand how the pandemic, supply chains, and government policy are affecting patient health outcomes and healthcare market dynamics.

In this brief, we report key insights and local medical perspectives from Argentina last quarter of 2022. We conduct our analysis based on primary research with experts in cardiology, neurology, endocrinology, otolaryngology, and other areas of general surgery. We also speak with hospital decision makers, industry opinion leaders, and market experts in medical devices and surgical equipment to track fluctuations in hospital investment decisions, purchasing patterns and procedure volumes from quarter to quarter.

### Key data on COVID in Argentina

- **COVID Deaths (official count)\*:** >117,000
- **Excess Deaths attributed to COVID\*\*:** >42,800
- **Vaccination rollout** – population having received first vaccine shot – 82.5%
- **Vaccination rollout\*\*\*** – Fully vaccinated population – 69.2%
- **Herd immunization speed** – estimated date for herd immunization: Q1 2022

Sources: Americas Market Intelligence, Council of the Americas, The Economist, COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

\* Estimate as of Dec 31, 2021. Source: Johns Hopkins University.

\*\*Estimate for the period from Apr 1, 2020, to Dec 31, 2020 (updated Nov 24, 2021). While official death counts have been reported in many outlets, several sources indicate that these tallies significantly underrepresent the true loss of life. One of these sources is The Economist, which has compared actual deaths to historic averages for the same period in prior years to estimate the excess number of deaths attributed to the virus.

\*\*\*Estimate as of November 19, 2021.

## Key data on patient health outcomes Argentina

- **Patient and procedure volumes** for elective procedures are slowly returning to historic averages but remain between 30-40% below their pre-pandemic levels.

"Covid has had a strong impact. We are very close to reaching normal levels: In surgeries we are entering a normal rhythm. The patients' viewpoint has also changed: they are no longer staying away from hospitals. Today we already have appointments 3 to 4 months out. And there will be more demand for services such as cardiology and nutrition (which was not available before the pandemic) and even psychoanalysis."

—**Purchasing Manager, Health Insurance Network, Buenos Aires Federal Capital** (October 2021).

- The gap differs by specialty: procedure volumes still lag an estimated 20% for cardiovascular interventions; 25% for endocrinology; 35% for otolaryngology; and 35% for neurosurgery.
- Sales of devices and consumables for cardiovascular procedures are still lagging, after dropping more than 35-40%.

"From March to December 2020, the market reduced interventions by 35% and we reduced billing by 40%. For hernia, there's a captive demand, for vascular there isn't: either you have surgery, or you die."

—**Commercial Director, Distributor (peripheral vascular products), Argentina** (September 2021).

"There has been a very large increase in the purchase and use of airway devices such as Intubation catheters, tracheostomy tubes, oxygen Masks, oral and nasal endotracheal tubes, laryngeal masks, breathing circuits, and intubation kits in general."

—**General Surgeon, large hospital, Buenos Aires Province** (October 2021).

"We try to make annual purchases, but suppliers are reluctant to do so due to high inflation and it is costing us a lot of money to make these transactions. Today purchases are made on a semi-annual basis. We always buy to have stock in 6 months. In 2020, however, there were no surgeries, so what we bought lasted the whole year."

—**Purchasing Manager, Teaching Hospital, Buenos Aires Federal Capital** (October 2021).

- The cost of procedures has not fluctuated significantly in elective surgeries.
- However, the cost of medical devices, has gone up as is customary due to high inflation—and will not return to pre-pandemic levels. The cost of logistics increased dramatically during the pandemic—both at port of entries and throughout domestic supply chains.

"For almost all products, the entry of the goods into the country and the logistical delays have been a problem. The increase in logistics has been between 300% and 500% because the ship took a long time and they had to come by plane. The pandemic and the desperation made everything increase."

—**Purchasing Manager, Health Insurance Network, Buenos Aires Federal Capital** (October 2021).

"In Argentina with the high level of inflation and the custom of transferring prices to the consumer, it is not possible to return to pre-COVID prices. Even less in the context of the current exchange rate."

—**Purchasing Manager, Large private hospital, Buenos Aires Federal Capital** (October 2021).

"The shortage of supplies has led to many more re-sterilizations, especially for devices such as scissors, tweezers, retractors, cannulas, electric Scalpels, laparoscopic and conventional force. Some disposable forceps of very good quality can be re-sterilized too."

—**Chief Nurse, Mid-sized Municipal Hospital, Buenos Aires Province** (October 2021).

- B. Braun and Medtronic stand out as leading brands in Argentina for neurosurgery and cardiovascular procedures.

"The Medtronic brand is the most durable and reusable for having greater structural strength. Second is B. Braun."

—**Cardiovascular surgeon, large private hospital, Buenos Aires Federal Capital** (October 2021).

GHI will continue to report on noteworthy trends in-country. For more in-depth market intelligence and insights, please contact us directly at: [info@globalhealthintelligence.com](mailto:info@globalhealthintelligence.com)

## About GHI

**Global Health Intelligence (GHI)** is the leading provider of data analytics for Latin American healthcare, specializing in the region's hospitals. Its databases deliver strategic market data for medical equipment/devices manufacturers that allow them to identify new sales opportunities, gauge demand for new products, understand their market share vs. those of their competitors, spot trends in the acquisition of products, determine market needs and more.