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Ecuador to Strengthen Management of its Cancer Control Strategy



Medical team from Solca Instituto Oncológico Nacional Dr. Juan Tanca Marengo, in Guayaquil during a meeting as part of the imPACT review. (Photo: A Benedicto/IAEA)

A team of international experts recommended that Ecuador should appoint a cancer control steering committee consisting of representatives from all major national cancer stakeholders to oversee the development and implementation of a National Strategy for Comprehensive Cancer Care.

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steering committee consisting of representatives from all major national cancer stakeholders to oversee the development and implementation of a National Strategy for Comprehensive Cancer Care. The strategy would set out a clear performance management and action plan with an associated budget to ensure that it contributes to a reduction in the national cancer burden.

This was one of a series of recommendations provided by an IAEA led 'imPACT Review' conducted upon the request of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Public Health in March to analyse the country's cancer control capacities and needs.

Carlos Durán, the Deputy Minister of Public Health, noted that the conclusions from the review would help Ecuador to identify its cancer control needs and to monitor the implementation of the country's current cancer control strategy.

The experts also suggested that the capacity to diagnose cancer in the country's public paediatric hospitals should be increased, for a phased plan to be designed to develop national radiotherapy



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services and ensure that radiation safety measures are fully instituted at healthcare facilities.

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), more than 28 000 people developed cancer in Ecuador in 2018, and over 14 500 died from cancer. The most common type for men is prostate cancer and breast cancer for women. By 2030, it is expected that the number of Ecuadorians that die from cancer each year will increase by around 50%.

The IAEA, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and IARC, led the team of experts to build upon the IAEA's first analysis of the country's cancer control situation in 2012 and note the progress and challenges encountered. The experts reviewed all areas of comprehensive cancer control from prevention to palliative care, as well as cancer registration and surveillance, national cancer control planning and governance.

The Review's team visited health facilities in the capital, Quito, and the major city of Guayaquil connected through a network-based healthcare model, as well as the Ministry of Public Health, SOLCA: Sociedad de Lucha contra el Cáncer, the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute. The experts also met with senior representatives from medical schools and civil society organizations.

Gina Watson, WHO's Representative in Ecuador, said: "WHO is ready to accompany the Ministry of Public Health in its efforts to fight cancer as part of our support to the Ecuadorian government's national health strategy within the upcoming WHO Country Cooperation agreement."

Through its technical cooperation programme, the IAEA supports Ecuador to strengthen its national capacity in new radiotherapy techniques. The country is also part of two regional projects to strengthen capacities in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Since 2005, 98 imPACT Reviews have been conducted by the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy around the world. Nineteen Latin America and Caribbean countries have hosted these Reviews.

Link to related resources:



John Lara, chief of diagnostic anatomic pathology at the IESS Teodoro Maldonado Carbo Hospital in Guayaquil, explains to mission experts how cancer patient records are stored. (Photo: A Benedicto/IAEA)

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