

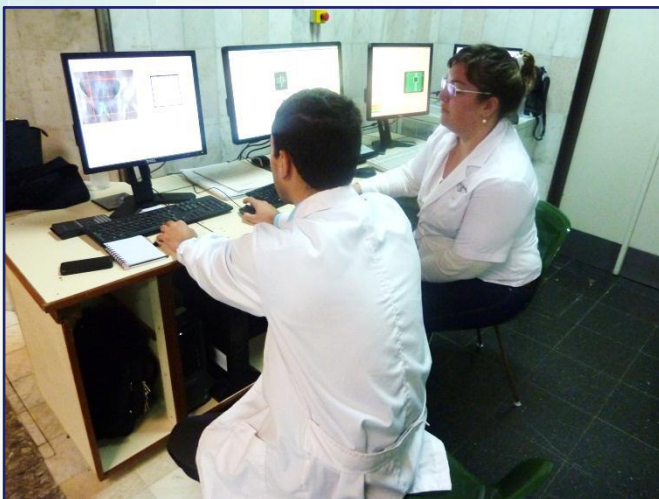
Improving cancer care in Uruguay with a linear accelerator

The challenge...

Malignant tumours are the second highest cause of death in Uruguay and are currently responsible for 24% of all deaths in the country. Although Uruguay has modern medical centres throughout the country, the University Hospital, where all medical personnel receive their training, did not have up to date equipment. In fact, the hospital was using a Cobalt 60 machine, which was not adequate neither for training purposes, nor for responding to the needs of patients, who were either denied treatment or placed on long waiting lists for treatment at other public facilities. It was important that the University Hospital could offer not only high level treatment for patients, but also training on the use of equipment similar to that which its graduates would be using in their professional careers.

The project...

Radiation oncology is one of the most important ways to treat cancer. The change in technology from Cobalt 60 to a linear accelerator (linac) is very significant. Linear accelerators provide fast and precise treatment, saving more lives with improved use of radiation. The IAEA, through its technical cooperation programme, procured and installed a much needed linac at the University Hospital. Financial assistance was also provided through the OPEC Fund for International Development and from Uruguay itself. Training was also provided to the staff of the University Hospital through the provider of the linac.



Linac operators being trained.



The newly installed linac and the team responsible for the project.

The impact...

Thanks to the project, the University Hospital is able to treat a larger number of patients in a more effective and efficient manner. Patients' waiting time before receiving treatment has also been reduced. In addition, as the hospital is the main source of training for all radiation oncologists, medical physicists and national University graduates, the quality of treatment throughout the entire country has improved.