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Radiation Therapy in Peru: Achievements and Challenges

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Peru is the fastest growing economy in Latin America (sustained increase in GDP, low inflation and poverty reduction). The health system is fragmented and until 2012, almost half of the population had no health insurance. The current government poses: Improved access to health and education, employment and social security, reducing extreme poverty, within a context of social inclusion. The Plan for Prevention and Control of Cancer (“Plan Esperanza”) was established in 2012 in order to reduce cancer mortality and morbidity, with greater access to oncology services (promotion, prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and palliative care). With an area of 1’285,216 square kilometers and almost 30 million inhabitants, cancer treatment resources are scarce. Regarding Radiation Therapy, until 2007, it existed only in Lima, the capital city (over 9 million inhabitants). Later, another services were established in two more regions. At present, there is 23 radiotherapy machines in whole country. In this regard, Plan Esperanza is working on strengthening Radiation Therapy Services nationwide.

Considering the population demand and availability of other cancer services (chemotherapy, oncologic surgery), the regions where need create new radiotherapy services were identified: 3 Hospitals in Lima (in peripheral areas: Cayetano Heredia at the North, Hipólito Unanue at East and Maria Auxiliadora at South). Also, other Regions of the country: Piura, Lambayeque, La Libertad at North; Junín in the Central Highland, Cusco in the Southern Highland, and Loreto in the Northern Forest. Each with 2 linear accelerators, except Loreto, where they will consider two 60 Cobalt bomb instead, due to the geographical conditions. Moreover, one linear accelerator in Arequipa Region will be acquired.

In Lima, the Hospitals are projected to become operational in 2016, while in the Regions, the Ministry of Health is providing them technical assistance in needs identification, planning and implementation of their projects.

Country or International Organization

Peru

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