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Letter to the editor in response to Li et al, "Radiation Oncology Residency Training in Latin America: A Call to Attention"

Alberto Lachos Dávila MD ,
Rosanna Morales Guzmán-Barrón MD PhD ,
Claudia A. Sedano MD , Claudia A. Sedano PhD

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Authors

Alberto Lachos Dávila, MD; albertolachosmd@gmail.com
Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, Lima, Peru
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6190-1959>

Rosanna Morales Guzmán-Barrón, MD PhD; rmoralesgb@gmail.com
Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, Lima, Peru

Claudia A. Sedano, MD; claudia.sedano@upch.pe
Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, Lima, Peru
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4871-1974>

Claudia A. Sedano, PhD *Corresponding Author
Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, Lima, Peru
Email: claudia.sedano@upch.pe
Phone: +51 - 95952 4000

In the cited article there are interesting data concerning Residency Training in the specialty in Latin America. However, some of Peru’s data are missing. In Peru, the residency place is offered by a university, so, health centers (public or private centers) may associate with many universities. As Li et al (1) mentioned, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH) has the only private training institution. Except for that difference, UPCH and the Universidad San Martín de Porres (USMP) have the same radiation oncology program and curriculum. Both programs have as public training place the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, Instituto Regional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas – IREN Norte, and Instituto Regional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas – IREN Sur. These three institutions are in Lima (capital of Peru), Trujillo (north of Peru), and Arequipa (south of Peru), respectively. In this case, each hospital has four residents (two per university) making a total of twelve residents in both programs.

In Peru, before being a resident it is indispensable to perform a one-year of general medicine practice, known as rural community service “SERUMS”. In this service, rarely exists close contact with oncology patients. Under these conditions, it is necessary to improve scientific education and knowledge in all areas of oncology (as radiology and clinical oncology) to have a

better comprehension of cancer disease and treatment options (2). Currently, we are in the process of obtaining a four-year residency program, instead of three years.

As in Latin America, Peru suffers from limited and centralized radiation therapy services, conditioning the residents' training. In Peru, only five regions (20%) have radiotherapy equipment and 50% of them are in Lima and Callao (3). The biggest Cancer Institute in Peru – INEN has a waiting list of at least one month, putting the patient's treatment and life at risk (4).

We share the necessity to standardize and improve the quality of radiation oncology education and training programs. For this reason, the Society of Radiotherapy of Peru (SRPE) has requested the Ibero-Latin American Association of Oncological Radiation Therapy (ALATRO), to prepare a document with minimum requirements to standardize the Radiotherapy centers in Latin America. It is also necessary to involve citizens and governments to prevent and prepare for the near future.

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