

RADIOTERAPIA

Overview of brachytherapy resources in Latin America: a patterns-of-care survey.

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Abstract

PURPOSE: Relatively little is known about available resources and patterns of practice for brachytherapy (BT) in Latin America. To rectify this situation, we performed a patterns-of-care survey whose aim was to assess the human and material resources available for BT in Latin America and document current clinical practices. **METHODS AND MATERIALS:** A total of 392 radiotherapy (RT) centers located in 17 Latin American countries were asked to complete an online survey that included detailed questions about BT practices, facilities, and staffing. The study was coordinated through central offices located in Spain and Peru. National coordinators were appointed to manage the survey in each individual country. **RESULTS:** Overall, 77 of the 392 institutions (20%) completed the questionnaire. Of the 14 countries with at least one response, the participation rate was 35% (77 of 223 RT centers). The average number of patients (RT+BT) per center was 917. The mean number of BT patients per center increased by 46% (from 105 to 153 patients) from 2002 to 2007. Gynecologic localizations (endometrium, cervix, and vagina) accounted for 95% of treatments, and the uterine cervix was the most common tumor site (75% of all treatments). **CONCLUSIONS:** In Latin America, BT is most commonly used to treat gynecologic tumors, particularly of the cervix. Relatively few interventions were performed for breast and prostate. This was the first study of its kind in this region and should be repeated periodically.