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Updated profile of the cancer burden, patterns, and trends in Latin America and the Caribbean

Lyon, France, 17 June 2022 – A new article by scientists from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in partnership with regional collaborators reports on the cancer burden in 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This updated profile is based on the estimates of national cancer incidence and mortality compiled as part of the IARC GLOBOCAN 2020 database.

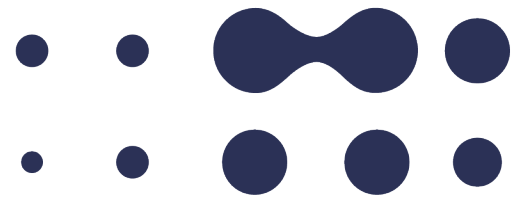
The new report, published in *The Lancet Regional Health – Americas*,¹ examines the relative magnitude and patterns of cancer across Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. It includes comparisons with the cancer profiles of the USA and Spain.

Cancer burden, patterns, and trends

A total of 1.5 million new cancer cases and 700 000 cancer deaths were estimated to occur per year in Latin America and the Caribbean. The corresponding overall (age-standardized) incidence and mortality rates were 186.5 and 86.6 per 100 000, respectively.

- The most common cancer types in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020 were prostate cancer (15% of all new cancer cases, excluding non-melanoma skin cancers), breast cancer (14%), colorectal cancer (9%), lung cancer (7%), and stomach cancer (5%). Lung cancer remained the leading cause of cancer death (12% of all cancer deaths), although the rates varied substantially between countries.
- The highest estimated incidence rates in both sexes – age-standardized (world) rates per 100 000 – were observed in Uruguay (269.3) and Martinique, France (248.7). These were more than double the lowest estimated incidence rates, observed in Guatemala (123.1) and Belize (120.9).
- Cancer mortality rates were highest in Uruguay and Barbados and lowest in Belize and Mexico.
- The mortality rates of infection-related cancers tended to decrease over time in most countries, whereas the rates of cancer types linked to the adoption of lifestyles more typical of industrialized countries mainly increased.
- The cancer burden in Latin America and the Caribbean is predicted to increase by 67% by 2040, to 2.4 million new cases per year (taking into account projected demographic changes but assuming that rates remain unchanged).

¹ Piñeros M, Laversanne M, Barrios E, de Camargo Cancela M, de Vries E, Pardo C, Bray F. An updated profile of the cancer burden, patterns and trends in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Lancet Reg Health Am*, Published online 17 June 2022; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2022.100294>



The report stresses that advocacy efforts are needed to increase the awareness of governments about the sustained value of quality-assured local data. The authors state that improved data capture and reporting need to be accompanied with developments in IT systems and extended collaboration between developers.

“With a paucity of cancer research in Latin America and the Caribbean relative to the cancer burden in the region, the full potential of population-based cancer registries in building such an evidence base for collaboration needs to be better exploited,” explains Dr Marion Piñeros, a scientist in the Cancer Surveillance Branch at IARC and the lead author of the report.

The authors also reiterate that the GLOBOCAN estimates for 2020 cannot replace the need for continuous recorded data from population-based cancer registries.

“Based on the current availability of population-based cancer registries in the region, and particularly of those of high quality, it is clear that major efforts are still needed to attain the overarching aim of the IARC-led Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development ([GICR](#)): to inform cancer control and save lives through better data,” says Dr Piñeros.

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The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. Its mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships. If you wish your name to be removed from our press release emailing list, please write to com@iarc.fr.