Improving human health in Latin America and the Caribbean

The challenge...
Cancer represents a large proportion of the total burden of disease in Latin America and the Caribbean. Countries in the region have identified a pressing need for comprehensive cancer control programmes. Radiotherapy is an essential component in modern cancer care and is used both for cure and palliation, but the quality of radiotherapy services and centres already in place in the region needs to be improved.

ARCAL projects in radiotherapy and nuclear medicine...
Human health projects in ARCAL Member States are designed to develop technological assets, expand services and increase human capacity. Through ARCAL projects, countries in the region receive specialized equipment, as well as training for medical doctors and physicists working in radiotherapy centres to better implement quality assurance programmes on the clinical and physics aspects of radiotherapy.

The impact...
ARCAL projects help to improve the practice of nuclear medicine in Latin America and the Caribbean and facilitate training in specialized nuclear medicine techniques. Seventeen ARCAL Member States have benefited from one very common application of nuclear technology in the treatment of cancer – radiotherapy.

Through ARCAL projects:
- 24 hospitals received equipment for patient positioning and immobilization.
- Cancer diagnosis and treatment centres have been updated, and have received radiotherapy reference materials and guidance.
- 77 radiation oncologists, medical physicists and radiation therapy technologists were trained in mould room techniques.
- 58 radiation oncologists and medical physicists were educated in the principles of evidence based radiotherapy.
- 24 radiation oncologists and medical physicists were trained in stereotactic techniques.
- 43 radiation oncologists and medical physicists were trained in high dose rate brachytherapy techniques.
- 40 radiation oncologists and medical physicists were educated in the principles of radiation biology.
- 94 radiation oncologists, medical physicists and radiation therapy technologists were trained in the principles of comprehensive auditing in radiotherapy.

Centres of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine in ARCAL Member States are now able to provide high quality treatments to cancer patients.

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