

Letter to the Editor

In Reply to Li et al

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In the cited article, there are interesting data concerning radiation oncology residency in Latin America. However, some of Peru's data are missing. In Peru, the residency place is offered by a university; thus, health centers (public or private) may associate with many universities. As Li et al¹ mentioned, the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia has the only private training institution. Except for that difference, the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia and the Universidad San Martín de Porre have the same radiation oncology program and curriculum. Both programs have as public training places the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, Instituto Regional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas Norte, and Instituto Regional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas Sur. These 3 institutions are in Lima (the capital of Peru), Trujillo (north of Peru), and Arequipa (south of Peru), respectively. In this case, each hospital has 4 residents (2 per university), for a total of 12 residents in both programs.

In Peru, before being a resident, it is indispensable to perform 1 year of general medicine practice, known as rural community service (SERUMS). In this service, there rarely is close contact with oncology patients. Under these conditions, it is necessary to improve scientific education and knowledge in all areas of oncology (as in 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 4-year residency program, instead of 3 years.

As in Latin America, Peru suffers from limited and centralized radiation therapy services, conditioning the residents' training. In Peru, only 5 regions (20%) have

radiation therapy equipment, and 50% of them are in Lima and Callao.³ Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, the biggest cancer institute in Peru, has a waiting list of at least 1 month, putting patients' treatment and lives at risk⁴.

We share the necessity to standardize and improve the quality of radiation oncology education and training programs. For this reason, the Peruvian Society for Radiation Oncology has requested the Ibero-Latin American Association for Oncology Radiation Therapy to prepare a document with minimum requirements to standardize the Radiation therapy centers in Latin America. Also, it is necessary to involve citizens and governments to prepare for the near future.

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