

# "This enormous burden" : controlling cervical cancer in Latin America

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The latest special issue from *ecancermedicalscience* collects four new research articles on the topic of cervical cancer prevention in Latin America.

Cervical cancer is an "enormous burden" for Latin American society, and the third leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the region, say guest editors Dr María Correnti and Dr María Eugenia Cavazza of the Central University of Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela.

"In contrast to other types of cancer, cervical cancer is a preventable and curable disease if it is diagnosed and treated early," say Drs Correnti and Cavazza in an accompanying editorial.

"But the absence of an effective prevention strategy leads to delayed diagnosis, and turns it into one of the leading causes of death among young women."

In 2012, the Pan American Health Organization estimated there were 36,000 deaths due to cervical cancer in the Americas - and 80% of these deaths occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Expert authors highlight three key research areas in the collection – epidemiology, prevention, and HPV infection. The topic of cervical [cancer prevention](#) is addressed from two vital angles – one article examines the types and impact of prevention programs in Latin America, while the second highlights the increasing role of elearning in cancer

prevention.

From Dr Luis Capote Negrin of the Oncology Program of the Spanish Ministry of Health comes a piece on the epidemiology of cervical cancer in Latin America, analysing the patterns – and impacts – of the disease through Globocan reports.

"It is important to learn from the experiences of other countries to improve the health of women not only as a health goal, but as an ethical imperative," says Dr Ileana Quirós Rojas of Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social, San José, Costa Rica. Her article describes a grassroots system of cervical cancer prevention in Costa Rica, combining social, medical and psychological factors from improving screening procedures to helping women access healthcare.

An alternative vision is offered by researchers at the Catalan Institute of Oncology, Spain led by Dr Assumpta Company. Their article describes a programme of prevention through elearning, creating new tools to educate healthcare professionals.

"Clearly the promotion and use of these tools, particularly in Latin America, would represent an important achievement in the development of national plans for the control of cervical cancer," comment Drs Correnti and Cavazza.

Researchers led by Dr Luis Téllez of the University of the Andes, Venezuela present an article on the nature of human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in the Venezuelan population. Their findings show that infections of this virus are slightly more prevalent in Venezuela than in European countries, and suggest that intervention will be a key method of prevention. As HPV infection is one of the most common causes of [cervical cancer](#), this paper is a call to action for Latin American countries.

The articles are available in Spanish and English, and are freely available for all to read in *ecancer*'s open-access journal.

We hope to enable readers around the world to take full advantage of this information - while the articles themselves are focused around Latin America, their findings will be of interest worldwide.

**More information:** Luis G Capote Negrin. Epidemiology of cervical cancer in Latin America, *ecancermedicalscience* (2015). DOI: [10.3332/ecancer.2015.577](https://doi.org/10.3332/ecancer.2015.577)

Ileana Quirós Rojas. The cervical cancer prevention programme in Costa Rica, *ecancermedicalscience* (2015). DOI: [10.3332/ecancer.2015.578](https://doi.org/10.3332/ecancer.2015.578)

Luis Téllez. Persistent infection with high-risk human papilloma viruses: cohort study, Mérida, Venezuela, *ecancermedicalscience* (2015). DOI: [10.3332/ecancer.2015.579](https://doi.org/10.3332/ecancer.2015.579)

Assumpta Company. Training in the prevention of cervical cancer: advantages of e-learning, *ecancermedicalscience* (2015). DOI: [10.3332/ecancer.2015.580](https://doi.org/10.3332/ecancer.2015.580)

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