

# RADIONCOLOGÍA

## **Perspectives on Patient Access to Radiation Oncology Services in South America.**

Amendola B, Quarneti A, Rosa AA, Sarria G, Amendola M.

Semin Radiat Oncol. 2017 Apr;27(2):169-175.

### Abstract

Cancer represents a fast-growing challenge worldwide, and is being recognized as an emerging and critical issue in low- and middle-income countries, such most of South America. This subcontinent is unique for its geography, culture, and ethnical diversity. Most of its countries have large expanses of jungle and desert where underserved population groups including indigenous (native Indians), represent a challenge for cancer care. Many indigent patients have no access to preventive care nor early diagnosis. This results in late presentations with advanced disease and frequently incurable cancer. Prompt and coordinated action from local and international organizations is needed to support and guide local governments to avoid a global crisis. The critical role of education to improve awareness of the importance of radiation therapy, a cost-effective treatment modality, with the potential to help these patients at a relatively low cost is discussed.

## **A national survey of HDR source knowledge among practicing radiation oncologists and residents: Establishing a willingness-to-pay threshold for cobalt-60 usage.**

Mailhot Vega R, Talcott W, Ishaq O, Cohen P, Small CJ, Duckworth T, Sarria Bardales G, Perez CA, Schiff PB, Small W Jr, Harkenrider MM.

Brachytherapy. 2017 Jul - Aug;16(4):910-915.

### Abstract

**PURPOSE:** Ir-192 is the predominant source for high-dose-rate (HDR) brachytherapy in United States markets. Co-60, with longer half-life and fewer source exchanges, has piloted abroad with comparable clinical dosimetry but increased shielding requirements. We sought to identify practitioner knowledge of Co-60 and establish acceptable willingness-to-pay (WTP) thresholds for additional shielding requirements for use in future cost-benefit analysis.

**METHODS AND MATERIALS:** A nationwide survey of U.S. radiation oncologists was conducted from June to July 2015, assessing knowledge of HDR sources, brachytherapy unit shielding, and factors that may influence source-selection decision-making. Self-identified decision makers in radiotherapy equipment purchase and acquisition were asked their WTP on shielding should a more cost-effective source become available.

**RESULTS:** Four hundred forty surveys were completed and included. Forty-four percent were ABS members. Twenty percent of respondents identified Co-60 as an HDR source. Respondents who identified Co-60 were significantly more likely to be ABS members, have attended a national brachytherapy conference, and be involved in brachytherapy selection. Sixty-six percent of self-identified decision makers stated that their facility would switch to a more cost-effective source than Ir-192, if available. Cost and experience were the most common reasons provided for not switching. The most common WTP value selected by respondents was <\$25,000.

**CONCLUSIONS:** A majority of respondents were unaware of Co-60 as a commercially available HDR source. This investigation was novel in directly assessing decision makers to establish WTP for shielding costs that source change to Co-60 may require. These results will be used to establish WTP threshold for future cost-benefit analysis.