



Cervical cancer in the Americas

Key facts

- Cervical cancer is a leading cause of death among women in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Over 80,000 women in the Americas were diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2008, and nearly 36,000 died from the disease
- The number of cervical cancer deaths in the region is projected to almost double to over 60,000 by 2030, if current trends continue
- The majority of the region's cervical cancer deaths (88%) are in Latin America and the Caribbean, where cervical cancer ranks as the second-leading cause of cancer cases and deaths among women of all ages
- Cervical cancer death rates are seven times higher in Latin America and the Caribbean than in North America, highlighting inequities in health
- Comprehensive cervical cancer prevention and control programs are essential to reduce the burden of disease
- Cervical cancer can be prevented in adult women if precancerous lesions are identified through screening and then treated
- Some 70% of cancer cases could be prevented through HPV vaccination of adolescent girls

Key PAHO actions

In the framework of the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control, PAHO is working with member countries in the Americas to:

1. *Conduct situation analyses*
2. *Improve information, education and counseling*
3. *Strengthen screening and pre-cancer treatment programs*
4. *Establish or strengthen information systems and cancer registries*
5. *Improve access and quality of cancer treatment and palliative care*
6. *Generate evidence to facilitate decision making on HPV vaccine introduction*
7. *Ensure equitable access and affordable comprehensive cervical cancer prevention*

In addition, PAHO has helped establish demonstration projects using alternative screening approaches in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. PAHO's ProVac initiative has developed a cost-effectiveness model to support decision making about HPV vaccine introduction, and HPV vaccines are included in the PAHO Revolving Fund, facilitating bulk purchases at discounted prices for participating countries. Finally, PAHO has a longstanding history of working with ministries of health in the Americas to improve quality of and access to radiotherapy services and to strengthen capacity for cancer treatment, in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency.