

Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



Monthly Newsletter of the PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program
Pan American Health Organization
Regional Office of the World Health Organization



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Spotlight: Cancer

World Cancer Congress 2008



About 25 million people worldwide are living with cancer. It is the second leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for about 13% of all deaths. Last year, cancer killed about 7.9 million people, about 72% of whom were in developing countries. WHO forecasts that by 2030, the annual global death toll will rise to about 11.5 million.

This year's [World Cancer Congress](#) was held 27–31 August in Geneva, Switzerland. The World Cancer Summit was hosted by the *International Union Against Cancer (UICC)*, the leading



international nongovernmental organization dedicated to the global control of cancer. The UICC holds a *World Cancer Congress* every two years.

Highlights of the *World Cancer Congress* closing ceremonies include an award to Raul Pitarque and Javier Bou, who won the prize for a symbol to designate smoke-free environments for children. Pitarque and Bou are tobacco activists in Argentina, and their simple but evocative design was judged to be widely useable, communicating effectively across cultures.

Also recognized at the ceremony were the winners from the *Reel Lives* film festival—the first ever devoted to the theme of cancer. Jan Gassmann from Switzerland was honored for his film *Chrigu*, a moving and surprising portrait of a young man who once had great plans for the future until, at the age of 21, an advanced-stage tumor was found in his neck.

Runners-up were *The Truth about Cancer* (USA) for best reportage, *The Art of Living* (India) for best personal story, *The Children of Avenir* (Morocco) for best educational or organizational film, and *Hookah* (Israel) for the best public service announcement.

The next *World Cancer Congress* will meet in Beijing, 18–21 August 2010.

Source: UICC communiqué. For further information, contact [Paraic Reamonn](#), UICC Information Officer, Geneva, Switzerland, phone (+41-22) 809-1890.

PAHO Featured at the World Cancer Congress

This year's [World Cancer Congress](#) united the world's leaders in the fight to control cancer. Over

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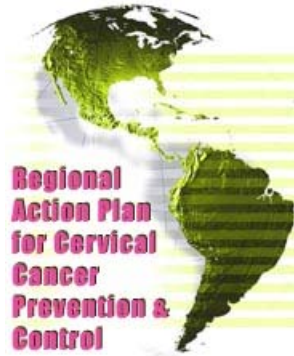
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2,500 practitioners, representatives from government and nongovernmental organizations, advocates, researchers, scientists, and public health experts focused on transforming the latest knowledge into strategies that can reduce the cancer burden.

PAHO's work in cancer prevention and control was prominently featured in the Congress session.

An oral presentation on PAHO's [Regional Strategy for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control](#) was delivered by Ms. Silvana Luciani.

During a Spanish-language session of the Congress, she also delivered a presentation on the challenges and opportunities for improving cervical cancer screening programs in Latin America. During the poster presentations, she presented PAHO's work in developing a Central American subregional cancer control plan, as well as RESCCAD's endorsement for a subregional cancer plan. (See [October 2007](#) issue; the RESCCAD are the meetings of the Central American Health Sector (*Reunión del Sector Salud de Centroamérica*, where Central American Ministers of Health meet to discuss health issues.)



PAHO was represented in several concurrent meetings, which included:

- ➔ The Steering Committee meeting of the *Breast Health Global Initiative* ([BHGI](#)), where the next consensus conference on guidelines for low- and middle-income countries was discussed.
- ➔ The Planning Committee for the 3rd *International Cancer Control Congress*.
- ➔ A coalition meeting with [Cervical Cancer Action](#).



The Congress was an excellent opportunity for learning, for networking and for promoting

PAHO's presence within the cancer control community.

PAHO Unites Cancer Control Stakeholders from LAC during the World Cancer Congress

PAHO convened Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) participants, as well as key partner organizations attending the *World Cancer Congress* in Geneva in August. The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussions from the June 2008 [Cancer Stakeholders Meeting](#) in Washington, DC,



regarding the *Latin America and Caribbean Alliance for Cancer Control* and a *Regional Plan of Action for Cancer Prevention and Control*. In this meeting, the structure and function of the alliance were discussed, along with possible joint projects as an alliance.

The participants agreed that an Alliance for Cancer Control would be beneficial to coordinate actions within the cancer community.

The **focus** of the alliance would be to work together in **three main priority areas**:

1. Support for national cancer control plans.
2. Capacity-building for cancer prevention and control.
3. Research.

Regarding the structure of the Alliance, it would include a Secretariat, which will be housed at Brazil's National Cancer Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Cancer* / [INCA](#)) and which will manage, coordinate, and facilitate communications

among participants; a Coordinating Committee, to plan and monitor alliance activities; and topic-specific working groups, to undertake project specific activities. An alliance portal will be established and also managed by INCA.

Regarding membership of the alliance, it was agreed that membership should be broad and include governments, cancer institutes, nongovernmental organizations, universities and all interested partners active in cancer control in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A small Coordinating Committee of the alliance will meet next in Rio de Janeiro, during the second week of December, to define its workplan and officially launch the alliance during a ceremony.

World Cancer Declaration Sets Ambitious Targets for 2020

Geneva, 31 August 2008: On the final day of this year's *World Cancer Congress*, a summit of more than 60 high-level policymakers, leaders, and health experts met and adopted a global plan aimed at tackling the growing cancer crisis in developing countries.



The plan, contained in the [World Cancer Declaration 2008](#), recommends a set of eleven cancer-busting targets for 2020 and outlines priority steps that need to be taken in order to meet them. It was offered as a global template for governments and other groups to tailor as they devise their own plans to guide local efforts.

“The rise of cancer in less affluent countries is an impending disaster,” WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan told delegates at the opening of the congress this week. “The time is right to make cancer control a development priority.”

Chan said she believed that several recent trends in public health make the international community especially receptive to the arguments made in the declaration and responsive to its call to action.

Former UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, who chaired the summit, said cancer control is a human rights issue tied to the right to health through access to an effective health system.

“Ultimately, it is a question of human rights and above all, it is a question of human dignity. Adoption of the World Cancer Declaration is another step in a real commitment—a vision—of how to tackle this huge world health issue,” said Robinson, who is now president of [Realizing Rights: The Ethnic Globalization Initiative](#), a New York-based human rights organization.

Much can be done to tackle cancer in the developing world, the experts said. About one-third of cancer cases can be prevented and another third can be cured if detected early and treated properly.

Targets recommended in the declaration include:

- ➔ Significant drops in global tobacco consumption, obesity and alcohol intake.
- ➔ Universal vaccination programs for hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV) to prevent liver and cervical cancer.
- ➔ Dramatic reduction in the emigration of health workers with specialist cancer training.
- ➔ Universal availability of effective pain medication.
- ➔ The dispelling of myths and misconceptions about the disease.

During the summit, participants made several suggestions for how to meet the targets in the declaration and emphasized certain priorities. The importance of myth reduction and proper pain relief for cancer patients were emphasized. The idea of a global fund for cancer, similar to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, was tabled as a possible goal, given that cancer kills more people than those three diseases combined.

Source: UICC communiqué. For further information, contact [Paraic Reamonn](#), information officer in Geneva Switzerland, phone (+41-22) 809-1890.

Central America and the Dominican Republic Define a Subregional Plan for Cancer Prevention and Control

As a follow-up to the [XXIII RESSCAD](#) (*Reunión del Sector Salud de Centroamérica*, or meeting of the health sector in Central America) agreement to



create a subregional cancer plan, the cancer program focal points from the Ministry of Health and Social Security systems across Central America and the Dominican Republic united to agree upon the contents of the cancer plan. The meeting was attended by all countries within the RESSCAD, as well as representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)), [WHO](#) headquarters, [PAHO](#) headquarters, and a few PAHO/WHO country offices.

The meeting began with a series of presentations, which helped to put into context the efforts in this subregion. Ms. Silvana Luciani of the PAHO [Chronic Disease](#) team introduced the subregional cancer plan, in the context of the many cancer control initiatives currently being implemented by various agencies in the region, including the PAHO-led development of a *Regional Action Plan for Cancer Prevention and Control* and the *Latin American and Caribbean Alliance for Cancer Control*. Dr. Pablo Jiménez of PAHO reviewed the proposal, recently submitted to the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (*Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo* / [AECID](#)) to mobilize resources for the implementation of the subregional cancer plan. Dr. Eduardo Rosenblatt presented the IAEA [project](#) in Central America to improve radiotherapy services, a project which forms a component of the subregional cancer plan. Dr. Juana de Rodríguez presented an initiative for bulk purchasing of medicines, including antineoplastic medicines, which will help to reduce the cost of drugs in the subregion. Dr. Cecilia Sepúlveda shared the vision of [WHO's cancer program](#) and reviewed the new

WHO chronic disease action plan and how it applies to the cancer control program.

The meeting gave participants an opportunity to hear an update from each of the countries on the status of their national cancer plans. Honduras and Nicaragua are in the process of developing their plans and are near completion. Panama, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic do not have national cancer plans and there are no current plans to initiate this process in these countries. Costa Rica, Belize, and El Salvador have national plans, with that of El Salvador focusing on cervical cancer.



There was tremendous input and active participation from everyone in defining the details of the cancer subregional plan. This enabled greater ownership and commitment by all countries throughout the subregion. Having events such as this—to allow information exchange and discussion of ideas across countries, disciplines and with international organizations—is very beneficial, as well as a learning process for everyone; and it helps to stimulate country-based actions. This subregional cancer plan will be presented, for endorsement, to the XXIV RESSCAD, which is scheduled in December in Honduras.

Global Developments

WHO to Establish Chronic Disease Research Priorities

The WHO Department of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health—in collaboration with the WHO Department of Information, Evidence and Research—held a two-day consultation to define a research agenda for chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs) as part of the *WHO Action Plan for NCDs*. Over 200 people from universities, ministry of health

programs, WHO Collaborating Centers, medical journals, professional societies, international organizations, and WHO headquarters and regional staff contributed to the process of defining NCD research priorities. Meeting participants represented all disciplines of the CNCD domain, namely cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, respiratory diseases, tobacco control, nutrition, physical activity, and health promotion.

Dr. Ala Alwan presented the *Global NCD Action Plan*, recently endorsed by the [61st World Health Assembly](#) (Resolution [WHA61.14: Prevention and Control of NCDs—Implementation of the Global Strategy](#)),

which outlines the specific recommendations for countries, partners and WHO to undertake in the areas of policy and advocacy, risk factor reduction, disease management, research, surveillance and monitoring.



Dr. Tim Evans also presented the [WHO Research Strategy](#), which provides a framework for WHO on how to set priorities and build health research capacity in low- and middle-income countries. Also discussed, were recent opportunities to enhance NCD research efforts, namely with the *Ovations Chronic Disease Initiative*, *Oxford Health Alliance*, and the *Global Forum for Health Research*.

It was a stimulating and successful meeting that helped deepen relationships between the WHO NCD program and leaders in CNCD research, to help define a research plan. The main NCD research priorities identified during the meeting include the following:

- ➔ Descriptive research on health system capacity and capabilities to manage the NCD burden.
- ➔ Qualitative research to better understand community perspectives and involve civil society and communities in designing appropriate interventions.
- ➔ Operational research/implementation research to evaluate the effectiveness of health service interventions in 'real life' conditions.

- ➔ Economic and policy research to better understand the cost-effectiveness of interventions as well as the policy decision making processes to adopt cost-effective interventions into public health programs.
- ➔ Health information system strengthening to allow for better surveillance and monitoring.

The meeting concluded with commitments from WHO to place greater emphasis on health research and to serve as coordinator, convener, advocate, and supporter of the research priorities identified in this meeting.

This meeting is part of a series of global NCD meetings that WHO is organizing this year. The other related meetings include

- ➔ *Access to Chronic Disease Medicines* (27 August).
- ➔ *Social Determinants for Chronic Disease Prevention* (15–17 September).
- ➔ *Expert Group on Marketing Foods to Children* (October).
- ➔ *Essential Interventions for NCDs in Primary Healthcare Services* (November).

In addition, the *Global Health Research Meeting* with senior Ministry of Health representatives will be held in November in Bamako, Mali, is an opportunity to create more interest, and commitments for global NCD research.

Progress in the Countries

Argentina: Community Promoters Project Report

The program for community intervention in health promotion and cardiovascular disease prevention, called *Guardacorazón*, is one of the regional projects underway within the framework of the *Pan American Cardiovascular Initiative (PACI)* organized by PAHO and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute ([NHLBI](#)) of the



Pan American Cardiovascular Initiative (PACI)



National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#)) of the United States.

The project has been developed in the city of Mar del Plata in Buenos Aires province, Argentina, as the result of an interinstitutional partnership between the Program for Preventing Heart Attacks in Argentina (*Programa de Prevención del Infarto en la Argentina* / [PROPIA](#)) at the National University of La Plata (*Universidad Nacional de La Plata* / [UNLP](#)) and the Institute of Epidemiology (*Instituto Nacional de Epidemiología* / [INE](#)). It also has support from local organizations and institutions and was declared of municipal interest by the city's Honorable Deliberative Council (*Honorable Consejo Deliberante*).



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LA PLATA
A través de la *Cátedra de Salud Comunitaria*
de la Facultad de Ciencias Médicas y de



PROPIA
Programa de Prevención del Infarto en Argentina



Instituto Nacional de Epidemiología
"Dr. Juan H. Jara"
Mar del Plata - Argentina

Worthy of mention within the framework of the activities being carried out is the strategy to train non-professional health promoters by utilizing the [Your Heart, Your Life](#) manual, prepared by NHLBI and adapted to the local culture.

The *Community Promoters Training Program* was carried out over a four-month period, with a modality of meeting twice a week and including practical activities.

This process culminated in the graduation of 18 cardiovascular health promoters, all of them women, as part of this first promotion.

From now on, the promoters are trained to:

- ➔ Tend to and orient the people of their community.
- ➔ Refer neighbors with cardiovascular problems, diabetes, and hypertension to the local health center for better treatment.
- ➔ Give advice on healthy lifestyles to all those in which cardiovascular disease risk factors have been identified.

Within the framework of the above tasks, educational activities in health promotion and cardiovascular disease prevention were carried out in selected community target groups, including an adult education facility and a local association for health promotion, in addition to other scenarios.

Within the expected strategies in these venues are:

- ➔ Promoting periodic physical activity and a healthy diet.
- ➔ Giving talks on the harm that produced by nicotine in people who smoke.
- ➔ Highlighting the importance of maintaining smoke-free environments.

Other community activities are also being carried out within this framework, notable among which is the puppet show known as *Happy Heart* (*Corazón contento*), especially developed for schoolchildren and neighborhood dining establishments. It spreads the message of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet.

Promoter Graduation Ceremony

On 18 July, in the auditorium of the Banking Association (one of the project's collaborating institutions), the promoters' graduation ceremony was held.



This special occasion was graced by the presence of Dr. Marcia Moreira from [PAHO-Argentina](#); Dr. Marcelo Tavella, Director of PROPIA; and local and university authorities.

Messages, gifts, and a video were joyfully shared. The latter was especially moving to all present, especially the promoters' family and friends.



Your Heart, Your Life Manual

Another one of the project's achievements has been the adaptation and validation of the [manual originally prepared in the USA](#) for its Hispanic population as a pedagogical tool to use in the process of training community cardiovascular health promoters.



This educational material consists of 10 chapters addressing such subjects as:

- The risk of developing heart disease;
- How to act in case of a heart attack;
- The importance of physical activity;
- Consuming fewer trans fats, saturated fats, and cholesterol;
- Controlling blood pressure;
- Maintaining a healthy weight;
- Controlling blood sugar;
- Enjoying heart-healthy foods;
- Caring for our heart even without much time and money; and
- Enjoying the benefits of living without cigarettes.

In order to carry out the Argentine version of the manual, a team of professionals was formed, made up of physicians, nutritionists, nurses, and social communicators. The team coordinated by the Ms. Lorena Lázaro Cuesta and Dr. Adrián Alasino, who were responsible for project field operations.

These professionals carried out an intense review that required six months, a period in which the necessary modifications were made in the statistical data, language, patterns of food consumption and eating habits, units of measure, and pedagogical approach.

Furthermore, there was an opportunity to acquire knowledge and become familiarized with the *Nutritional Guidelines for the Argentine Population* ([Guías alimentarias para la población argentina](#)) formulated by a consensus of local nutritionists and currently being disseminated on a grand scale by the Ministry of Health of the Nation (*Ministerio de Salud de la Nación* / [MSAL](#)).

The end result is a 470-page manual to which a series of educational drawings that illustrate each chapter have been added.

All those that desire knowledge and more details and information on the contents of the manual can make a request via the [PROPIA](#) website.

Source and contact person: [Dr. Adrian Alasino](#), Family Practice Specialist, Guardacorazón program, PROPIA, UNLP.

Mexico: Social Marketing Course

The course on *Introduction to Social Marketing and Its Application to Healthy Lifestyles* is part of the [CARMEN](#) School and the Summer Program of the National Institute of Public Health of Mexico (*Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública*/[INSP](#)). It was carried out at the INSP in collaboration with PAHO, the PAHO Regional Chronic Disease Program, [PAHO-Mexico](#), and the University of South Florida ([USF](#)). The instructors were Anabelle



Bonveccio and Florence Theodor from the INSP, Carol Bryant of the University of South Florida, and Dr. Branka Legetic of the [PAHO Chronic Disease](#) team.



The 40-hour course ran for 5 days, with 27 **participants** from different backgrounds: professionals from the Secretariat of Health of Mexico ([Secretaría de Salud de México](#)), Departments of Health Policy and Promotion; graduate students in Nutrition from the INSP; university instructors; and other interested parties in social marketing techniques. The profile of the participants was diverse, ranging from physicians, sociologists, psychologists, to nutritionists and lawyers.

Course I included:

- Teamwork and selection of the issues upon which the participants are going to work during the course.
- Applying techniques from training research.
- Population segmentation.
- Product formulation,
- Price evaluation.
- Manner and place of promotion.
- Appraisal of the project itself.

The **issues** selected were:

- Obesity and overweight among children.
- Physical activity.
- Diabetes.
- Cervical cancer.
- Limiting sale of junk food and products from vending machines.

At the end of the day, evaluation forms were distributed to the training team, the course managers, and all participants.

The course provided the opportunity to meet with Dr. Juan Rivera, Director of the INSP, which was conducted in the presence of the course director, Professor Anabelle Bonaveccio. The talk revolved around the course as a way to take advantage of the preparatory work done when duplicating and applying it in Mexican and Central American projects. The director was very happy with the profile and background of the participants.

Comments were made on the new *Meso American Initiative for Better Nutrition (Iniciativa para Mejor Nutrición en Mesoamérica)*, which includes, in addition to the Central American countries, Southern Mexico and Colombia), funded through grants from the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and the Carso Health Institute ([Instituto Carso Salud](#)). In the same proposal, the technique of Social Marketing selected here will be used for dissemination and application in the area of social communication. Agreement was made to monitor the Meso American initiative and promote the course within its framework.

For more information online, see the [Full Program](#) and the [Agenda](#) (both in Spanish) accessible via the [meeting page](#) in English.

Source: Dr. [Branka Legetic](#), PAHO Chronic Disease Team.

Trinidad and Tobago Appoints a CNCD Technical Advisory Committee

Trinidad and Tobago has formally **appointed** and **launched** a **Chronic Noncommunicable Disease Technical Advisory Committee**.



Terms of Reference

- To advise the Minister of Health on the form and functioning of an appropriate national mechanism or body to plan and co-ordinate implementation of national strategies for the prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs) in Trinidad and Tobago, taking into account the obligations conferred by the [Declaration of Port-of-Spain](#) as well as other arrangements that may be appropriate in the local context.
- To advise the Minister of Health on existing gaps in policies and legislation related to CNCD prevention and control and make recommendations for closing those gaps in the shortest possible time.

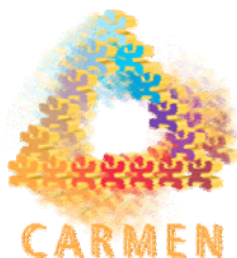
- To promote the development of a National Strategic Plan on the control of CNCDs.
- To recommend relevant research.
- To provide advice to the Minister of Health on methods of strengthening public-private partnerships.

Membership

The Committee is appointed for a period of three years and is made up of the following persons:

- Professor Surujpal Teelucksingh, Chairman, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of the West Indies ([FMS/UWI](#))
- Dr. Anton Cumberbatch, Chief Medical Officer, [Ministry of Health](#)
- Ms. Yvonne Lewis, Deputy Director Health Promotion, Ministry of Health
- Ms. Claudette Ible, Curriculum Coordinator, [Ministry of Education](#)

- Ms. Hollis Hinds, Senior Business Analyst, [Ministry of Trade and Industry](#)
- Mr. Dale Enoch, Representative of the Media
- Dr. Glennis Andall-Brereton, Program Manager, Unit of Noncommunicable Diseases and Injury Prevention, Caribbean Epidemiology Centre ([CAREC](#))
- Dr. [Carol Boyd-Scobie](#), PAHO/WHO Representative in Trinidad and Tobago
- Ms. Augusta Rulow-St. Louis, Education Officer / Social Worker, [Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society](#)
- The [Ministry of Social Development](#)
- The [Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources](#)
- The [Ministry of Legal Affairs](#)
- The Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute ([CFNI](#))
- The [Diabetes Association of Trinidad and Tobago](#)



Integrated Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



STOP THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC DISEASE

PROMOTE. PREVENT. TREAT. CARE

The PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program invites the readers of this newsletter to submit contributions on activities related to chronic disease in the Americas. Send contributions (1-3 paragraphs) to Dr. James Hospedales (hospedaj@paho.org) with copy to Pilar Fano (fanopili@paho.org) and Suzanna Stephens (stephens@paho.org). Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Silvana Luciani (lucianis@paho.org). Instructions and criteria can be found on the homepage for this newsletter at the web link below:

<http://www.paho.org/english/ad/dpc/nc/cronic.htm>