

EDITORIAL

Inequalities and challenges in pediatric cancer diagnosis in Peru: limitations of a developing country

Desigualdades y desafíos en el diagnóstico de cáncer pediátrico en el Perú: limitaciones de un país en vías de desarrollo

Guillermo Salavatierra¹, María del Pilar Huby¹, Katia Granados-Guibovich¹, Zulema Tomas-Gonzales²

¹Unidad de Desarrollo de Investigación, Tecnologías y Docencia, Instituto Nacional de Salud del Niño San Borja, Lima, Perú

²Dirección General, Instituto Nacional de Salud del Niño San Borja, Lima, Perú

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Corresponding author:

Zulema Tomas-Gonzales
Address: Instituto Nacional de Salud del Niño San Borja, Av. Javier Prado Este 3101, Lima 15037, Perú
Phone: +51012300600
E-mail: ztomas@insnsb.gob.pe

ORCID iDs

Guillermo Salavatierra
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6887-2599>
María del Pilar Huby
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9898-433X>
Katia Granados-Guibovich
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7820-5108>
Zulema Tomas-Gonzales
 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1674-2119>

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Worldwide, the burden of oncologic disease among pediatric patients is high, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as Peru (1). Approximately 85% of all pediatric cancer cases occur in LMICs (2), where pediatric cancer mortality rates are significantly higher than in high-income countries, around 80% in LMICs and 20% in high-income countries (3). According to the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas, the incidence of pediatric oncologic diseases is rising, with acute leukemias, brain tumors, retinoblastomas, and lymphomas being the most frequent (4).

This increase in cases has led to a greater demand for healthcare services in regions where systems are not yet fully developed. In addition, the number of pediatric specialists capable of providing a multidisciplinary approach to these diseases is limited, underscoring the need to expand this critical workforce. Delays in diagnosis and treatment are key contributors to the high pediatric cancer mortality in LMICs, where only 30% of children receive timely oncologic care. Although in Peru the high mortality rate among children with cancer is influenced by various cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors, delays in diagnosis and treatment remain the main cause. The Instituto Nacional de Salud del Niño San Borja (INSN-SB) is a highly specialized pediatric surgical hospital that annually manages between 80 and 110 new cancer cases. Our mission is to provide advanced care for pediatric patients while fostering specialized training for healthcare professionals to improve cancer treatment outcomes in Peru.

In this fourth issue of the journal *Investigación e Innovación Clínica y Quirúrgica Pediátrica* we present fourteen scientific manuscripts addressing diverse conditions that affect the Peruvian pediatric population, including oncologic diseases.

We hope this issue highlights the importance of INSN-SB as a specialized, high-complexity center in Peru. We extend our invitation to the scientific community dedicated to pediatric health to consider publishing in our journal.

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