

Care for cancer patients is a priority

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Contra el Cáncer*

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Every February 4th is celebrated as World Cancer Day, which is one of the main causes of death in the world, where it is estimated that there will be 20 million new cases in the next two decades.

This day is an opportunity to strengthen social awareness about the importance of knowing the risk factors, prevention measures and early detection, which can contribute to reduce the number of deaths from this cause.

In Cuba, this disease also has a high incidence, which is why attention to this health problem is a priority for the health authorities.

The strategy for cancer control in our country integrates efforts for education and promotion of health actions, which contribute to improve knowledge about the disease, as well as healthy practices in the population.

Even in the most critical situation due to COVID 19 in the national territory, assistance to patients was not stopped. A series of measures were adopted to prevent them from contracting the virus and to be able to continue with the treatment.

Thus, follow-up consultations were maintained and, at the same time, care was guaranteed to those persons referred by the primary health level with a suspected diagnosis.

It was a great effort, since it was necessary to dedicate personnel and time to attend to COVID 19 patients, but also to ensure the treatment of cancer patients, given the difficulties generated by the genocidal U.S. blockade, which was intensified in times of pandemic.

Because of the unilateral siege, for example, in the period from August 2021 to February 2022, Cuban children with different types of cancer could not receive the most suitable chemotherapy treatment for their illness.

Likewise, on many occasions the repair and maintenance of diagnostic and analytical equipment could not be carried out because their components are of U.S. manufacture, one of the many limitations imposed by the hostile U.S. policy.

But the health personnel and the scientific community do not give up in the face of these limitations. Our researchers, for example, have made possible the CIMAVAX vaccine against lung cancer, a drug with few adverse reactions and which has prolonged the lives of many with a satisfactory state of health.

In Cuba, free care is provided to cancer patients, in spite of its high cost, and support is also provided to families, who are prepared to face this situation.

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