

# *Cuba joins actions for World Cancer Day*

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By María Josefina Arce

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The WHO has repeatedly warned about the delay and lack of access to diagnosis and treatment in the poorest countries. This situation has worsened with the arrival of COVID 19.

According to the world health organization, the pandemic interrupted cancer treatments in more than 40% of the countries, although these patients are at greater risk from the disease caused by the new

coronavirus.

In Cuba, attention to this health problem has been and is a priority for the authorities. Therefore, in these times of pandemic, assistance to these people was maintained, even when the confrontation with COVID 19 demanded the disbursement of substantial funds and that many of these professionals joined other institutions to support the treatment of those infected.

The U.S. blockade, which intensified during the world health emergency, further hindered the acquisition of the necessary drugs and technology. However, the high qualification of these specialists and their commitment to the wellbeing of their patients has made it possible to provide an adequate response.

For decades, Cuba has had a National Cancer Control Program, which has prevention as one of its pillars and includes educational actions, early diagnosis, treatment and personalized attention to the patient.

The country is organized from the primary level, with the community doctor and nurse, to the tertiary level, which includes specialized centers, to provide early and effective care, which helps to control the disease.

Our researchers have made possible drugs to improve the quality of life of these patients. The CIMAVAX and VAXIRA therapeutic vaccines for lung cancer, the result of the work of the Molecular Immunology Center in Havana, stand out.

Both offer the possibility of turning advanced cancer into a controllable chronic disease and extending the life span of those affected.

"For a fairer care" is the slogan of World Cancer Day, which is celebrated on February 4 and which Cuba joins every year with various actions to raise the population's awareness and self-responsibility and thus contribute to turn this ailment into a chronic disease.

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