

Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer

Learn how to help prevent cancer in yourself and your family



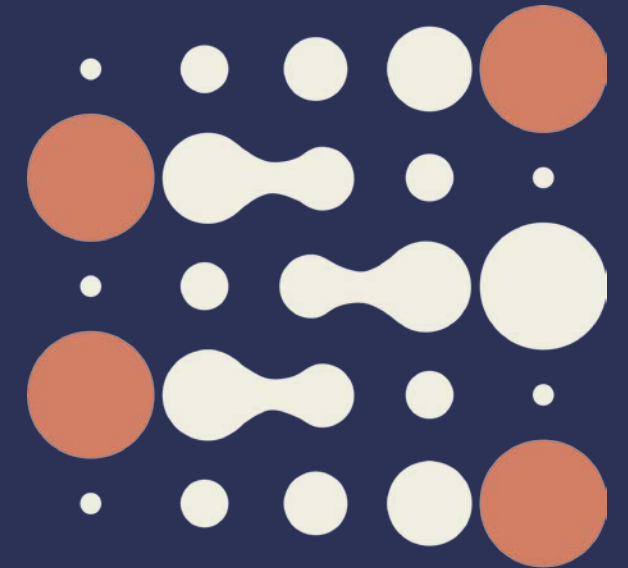
The Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer: 1st edition

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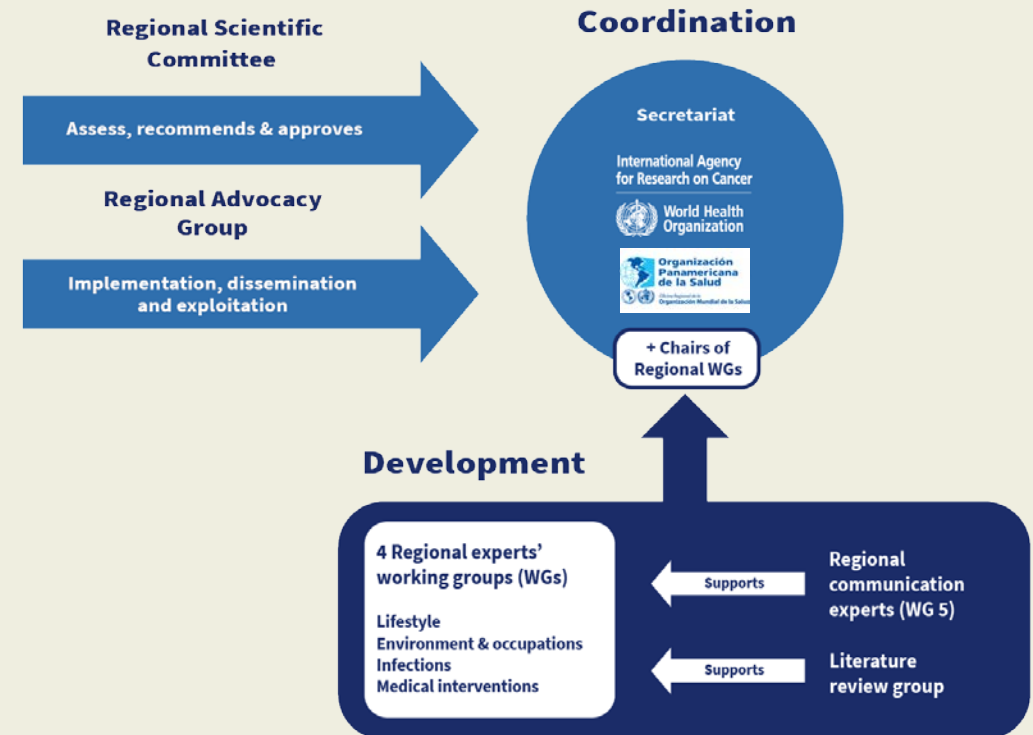
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International Agency
for Research on Cancer

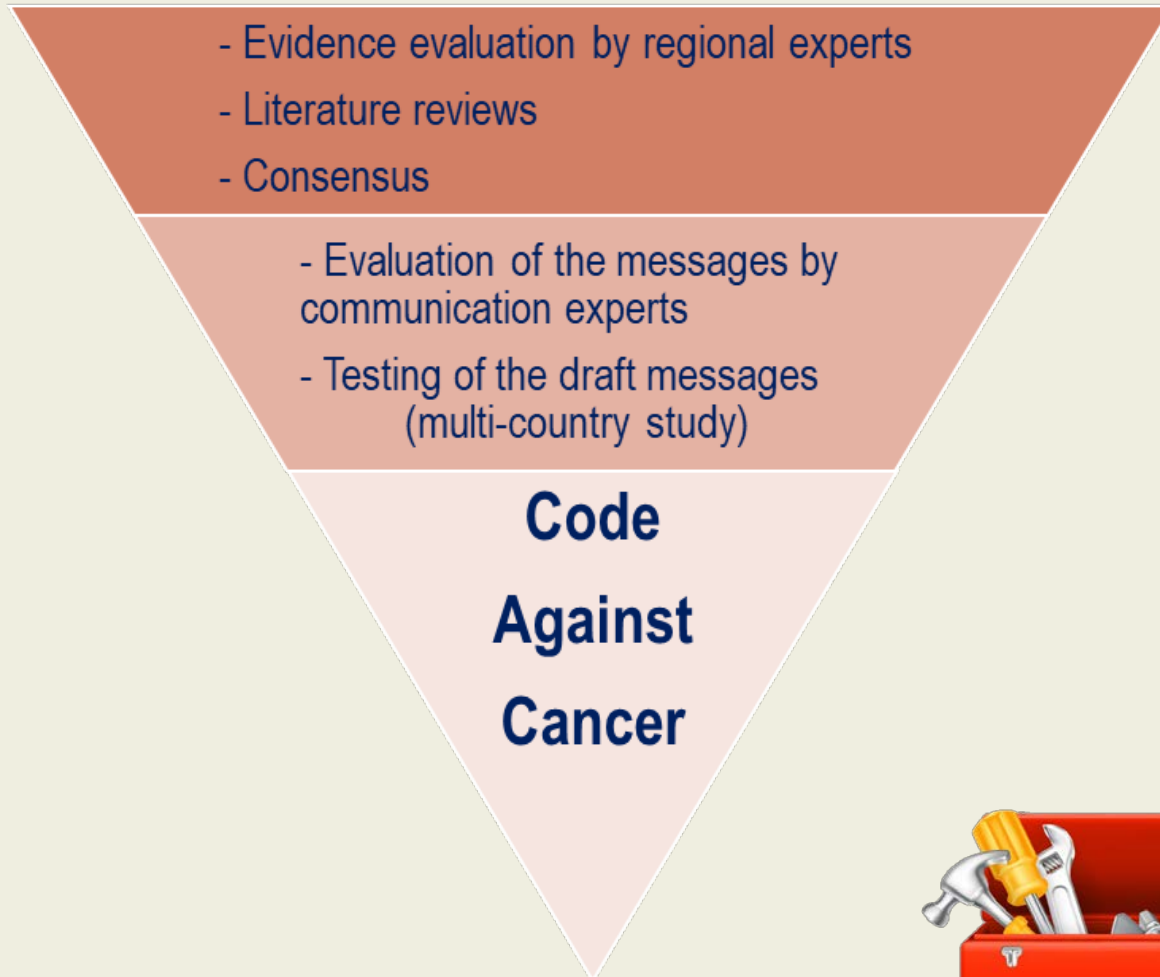


Introduction

- The World Code Against Cancer Framework is a multi-stakeholder initiative, led by IARC, to promote cancer prevention globally through the development and dissemination of region-specific cancer prevention recommendations.



Top-down strategy



Criteria:

1. Based on sufficient scientific evidence
2. Relevant for the region
3. Targeted to the general population
4. Actionable at the policy level
5. Clear communication

Working Groups:

1. Lifestyle determinants
2. Environmental and occupational determinants
3. Infections and related interventions
4. Medical interventions
5. Communication and education



- Universal evidence-based cancer prevention messages for the LAC region **“Toolbox”**.
- Long-term influence on cancer control policies.

Results

Outputs of the LAC Code Against Cancer (1st edition):

Level 1: LAC Code Against Cancer

17 recommendations to the individual and its complementary recommendations for policymakers (Spanish, Portuguese and English)

Individual recommendations:

Latin America and the Caribbean Code against Cancer

Learn how to help prevent cancer in yourself and your family

Specialists on the subject and civil society representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean, convened by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), have reviewed the scientific evidence and recommend the following 17 actions people can take to help prevent cancer:

1. Don't smoke or use any type of tobacco. If you do, quitting is possible, with professional help if needed. Don't use e-cigarettes either, as they lead to tobacco use.
2. Make your home a smoke-free place. Respect and promote laws that ensure smoke-free spaces to protect our health.
3. Achieve or maintain a healthy weight throughout your life to help prevent several types of cancer.
4. Get daily physical activity throughout your life and limit the time you spend sitting. Being a physically active person helps prevent several types of cancer.
5. Eat a healthy diet:
 - Eat as many fruits and vegetables as possible at each meal, and regularly include legumes such as beans and lentils.
 - Eat whole grains, such as whole-grain bread, corn tortillas, and brown rice, rather than refined grains such as white bread or rice.
 - Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages, drink water instead.
 - Limit your consumption of ultra-processed foods, such as sweets, sweetened breakfast cereals, salty snacks, pastries, and cookies, among others. Instead, eat natural foods or foods prepared at home.
 - Avoid processed meats, such as deli meats, sausages, or cured meats, and limit your consumption of red meat.
 - Limit your consumption of very hot beverages, such as tea, coffee, and mate. Wait a few minutes until the liquid no longer feels hot enough to burn your lips or tongue.
6. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages. This helps prevent several types of cancer.
7. Breastfeed your baby—the more months the better—to help prevent breast cancer and excess weight in your baby.
8. Protect yourself from direct sun exposure during peak sunlight hours to help prevent skin cancer.
9. If you cook or heat your home with coal or firewood, make sure smoke doesn't build up inside your home.

10. If air pollution is high where you are, limit your time outdoors.
11. Find out if your job exposes you to substances that can cause cancer, and request and adopt the recommended protective measures.
12. Infection from *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria can cause stomach cancer. Check with health professionals to find out if you might benefit from screening and treatment for this bacterial infection.
13. Infection with viruses such as hepatitis B and C, human papillomavirus (HPV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can also cause cancer. Therefore:
 - Vaccinate children for hepatitis B virus in their first 24 hours of life. Vaccinate yourself and your family at any age if you have not yet done so.
 - Vaccinate girls and teens against the human papillomavirus (HPV), primarily to help prevent cervical cancer, as well as other types of cancer. Take this preventive measure at the ages recommended in your country. If available, vaccinate boys as well.
 - Talk to health professionals to see if you might benefit from screening and treatment for hepatitis B and C viruses to help prevent liver cancer.
 - Get tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and ask about the prevention and treatment programs available in your country.
 - Make sure to use condoms consistently and correctly, especially with new or casual partners.
14. Do not use hormone replacement for menopause unless directed to do so by your healthcare provider. Hormone replacement can cause breast cancer.

Cancer can be controlled and cured if it is detected and treated early:

15. If you are between the ages of 50 and 74, visit a health care provider and ask for an early detection test for colon and rectal cancer (fecal occult blood test or colonoscopy). Based on the results, follow your health professional's recommendations promptly.
16. If you are 40 years of age or older, visit a health care provider every two years for a clinical breast exam. From age 50 to 74, get a mammogram every two years. Based on the results, follow your health professional's recommendations promptly.
17. If you are between the ages of 30 and 64, visit a health care provider and ask for a molecular human papillomavirus (HPV) test at least every 5–10 years for early detection of cervical cancer. Ask if you can collect the sample yourself. If you don't have access to the HPV test, ask for the exam that is available in your country. Based on the results, follow your health professional's recommendations promptly.

Policy recommendations:



8. Protect yourself from direct sun exposure during peak sunlight hours to help prevent skin cancer.

The public policy recommendations described below are based on internationally agreed upon and accepted strategies.

Sun exposure⁹

- Promote public programs to reduce sun exposure, including the design of public spaces that protect the population.
- Regulate occupational exposure to the sun and monitor the implementation of programs to reduce sun exposure.

⁹ Pan American Health Organization, Climate Change for Health Professionals: A Pocket Book, Washington, D.C.: WHO, 2020.



12. Infection from *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria can cause stomach cancer. Check with health professionals to find out if you might benefit from screening and treatment for this bacterial infection.

The public policy recommendations described below are based on internationally agreed upon and accepted strategies.

*Helicobacter pylori*¹¹

- Define national policies on the screening and treatment of *Helicobacter pylori* infection according to the various at-risk population groups. Develop organized programs to implement these policies.
- Ensure the availability of the lab tests, treatment, follow-up, and diagnostic procedures required for these programs, and implement antibiotic resistance testing to ensure high eradication rates.

¹¹ Malfertheiner P, Megraud F, Rokkas T, Otsen JF, Lior H, Schulz C, et al. Management of *Helicobacter pylori* infection: the Maastricht V/Florence consensus report. *Gut*. 2022;01:30

Complementary materials:

Recommendation 12

Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer

Infection with viruses such as hepatitis B and C, human papillomavirus (HPV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can also cause cancer. Therefore:

- **Vaccinate children for hepatitis B virus** in their first 24 hours of life. **Vaccinate yourself and your family at any age** if you have not yet done so.
- **Vaccinate girls and teens** against the human papillomavirus (HPV), primarily to help prevent cervical cancer, as well as other types of cancer. **Take this preventive measure at the ages recommended in your country.** If available, vaccinate boys as well.
- **Talk to health professionals to see if you might benefit from screening and treatment for hepatitis B and C viruses to help prevent liver cancer.**
- **Get tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and ask about the prevention and treatment programs available in your country.**
- **Make sure to use condoms consistently and correctly, especially with new or casual partners.**

Using condoms helps to prevent infections with sexual-transmitted viruses.

PAHO

Recommendation 10

Latin America and the Caribbean Code Against Cancer

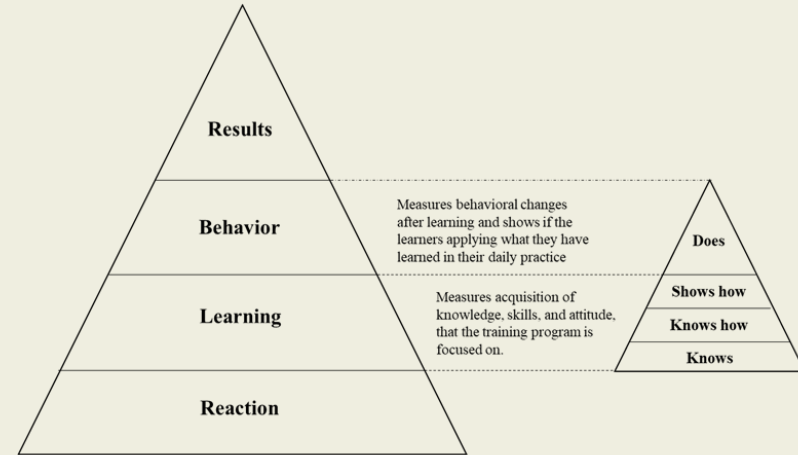
If **air pollution** is high where you are, **limit your time outdoors.**

PAHO

Results

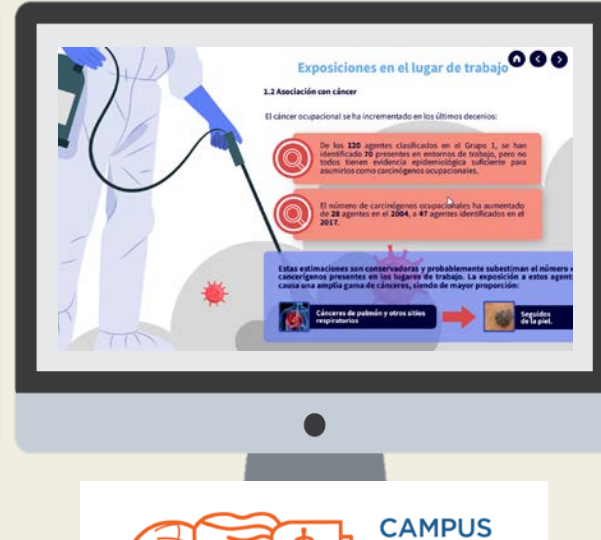
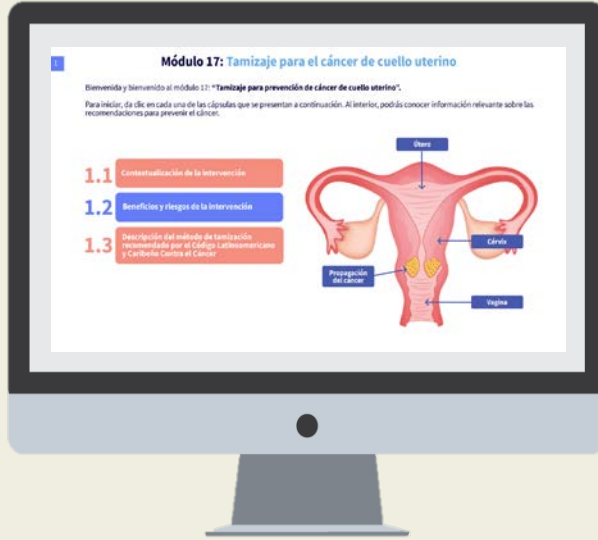
Outputs of the LAC Code Against Cancer (1st edition):

Level 2: Knowledge translation output. A free-of-charge online competency-based microlearning programme for primary healthcare professionals (Spanish, Portuguese and English)



Kirkpatrick's Learning Evaluation model

Miller's Clinical Assessment Framework



Results (II)

- **Level 3: Scientific publications:** 9 peer-reviewed articles published in *Cancer Epidemiology* and several commentaries
- The LAC Code Against Cancer, 1st edition, was launched the 17th October 2023.



Related publications

<https://cancer-code-lac.iarc.who.int/en/>

Acknowledgements

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Monitoring and evaluation

- IARC is leading the Monitoring and Evaluation Phase to assess the impact of the LAC Code by:
 - measuring regional cancer prevention literacy in the general population, and
 - conducting intervention studies using implementation research in different settings (e.g., primary healthcare centres).



Key take-home messages

- The LAC Code Against Cancer, 1st edition, offers an exceptional tool for cancer prevention education and public health.
- It has been developed *“by the experts of region of Latin America and the Caribbean and for the region”*.
- Provides evidence-based recommendations
 - to educate the public on healthy behaviours
 - to encourage adherence to primary and secondary prevention interventions
 - to guide and support governments in the implementation of the best cancer control strategies.
- Build capacity to contribute to reducing cancer burden in LAC.
- Importance of monitoring and evaluating the dissemination of the Code and its impact amongst the general population.