



HEMATOLOGY, TRANSFUSION AND CELL THERAPY

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Letter to the Editor

Closing the gaps: Tackling myeloma inequities in Latin America

1 Dear Editor,

2 Multiple myeloma (MM), a malignancy of plasma cells, poses
3 a significant global health challenge, characterized by dispar-
4 ities in incidence, treatment access, and outcomes. Advances
5 in MM therapies have significantly improved survival rates
6 globally, but inequities in care and treatment outcomes
7 remain particularly pronounced in Latin America.¹⁻³

8 The global burden of MM is shaped by genetic, environ-
9 mental, and demographic factors. Latin America faces higher
10 rates of late-stage diagnoses compared to wealthier regions
11 due to limited awareness and inadequate screening initia-
12 tives. These disparities are especially evident in Indigenous
13 and underserved populations, reflecting systemic health
14 inequities.²⁻⁴ The projected rise in MM cases highlights the
15 urgent need for interventions to address these gaps.⁴

16 Social determinants of health

17 Social determinants of health (SDOH) play a critical role in
18 shaping MM outcomes. Socioeconomic status, education, and
19 geographic location influence access to timely diagnosis and
20 effective treatment. Patients from lower socioeconomic back-
21 grounds are more likely to experience delayed diagnoses and
22 poorer survival outcomes.^{2,3} Rural populations, in particular,
23 face challenges in accessing specialists and advanced diag-
24 nostic tools, exacerbating these disparities.^{3,5,6}

25 Healthcare systems in Latin America are fragmented, lead-
26 ing to significant disparities between public and private sec-
27 tors. Many facilities lack access to critical diagnostic tools,
28 including next-generation sequencing and cytogenetics,
29 which are essential for precise risk stratification. Advanced
30 treatment options, such as autologous stem cell transplanta-
31 tion (ASCT) and proteasome inhibitors, remain inaccessible to
32 many patients due to resource constraints.^{3,4,5}

33 Financial barriers are a significant challenge for MM
34 patients in Latin America. High costs of novel therapies com-
35 bined with limited insurance coverage force many patients to
36 opt for suboptimal care or forgo treatment altogether. Policies

aimed at expanding insurance coverage and subsidizing
treatment are crucial to alleviating financial toxicity.^{2,6,7}

Timely initiation of treatment is a key determinant of MM
prognosis. However, logistical challenges such as referral bot-
tlenecks, lack of infrastructure, and delays in diagnosis con-
tribute to poorer outcomes for patients in the region.^{3,5,6}

MM outcomes in Latin America are poorer than in high-
income countries due to delayed diagnoses, limited treatment
availability, and systemic socio-economic inequities. Closing
these gaps through targeted interventions, improved health-
care access, and addressing SDOH is critical to improving
patient survival and quality of life.^{1,2,4}

Strategies to address disparities

Investing in healthcare infrastructure and fostering equitable
access to MM therapies should be priorities for policymakers
in Latin America. Collaborative efforts among governments,
non-governmental organizations, and international stake-
holders are essential for reducing resource gaps and promot-
ing capacity building.^{3,4}

Community engagement is vital for reducing health dis-
parities. Awareness campaigns tailored to cultural and
regional contexts can improve early detection and encourage
treatment adherence. The integration of community health
workers into healthcare teams has proven effective in
expanding access to underserved populations.⁵⁻⁷

Expanding research initiatives in Latin America is essen-
tial for understanding region-specific challenges and develop-
ing evidence-based interventions. Establishing regional MM
registries can provide valuable data on disease patterns, treat-
ment efficacy, and healthcare disparities, enabling targeted
policy decisions.^{4,6}

Conclusion

Health disparities in MM care across Latin America highlight
systemic inequities rooted in socio-economic and healthcare

barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving policy reforms, community-based strategies, and enhanced research efforts. By prioritizing health equity, stakeholders can ensure that advancements in MM care benefit all patients, irrespective of their geographic or socio-economic circumstances.


Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Jorge Contreras 

New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center

*Corresponding author. Jorge Contreras, New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center
E-mail address: joc4006@med.cornell.edu

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