Deliberation about the problem

Dialogue participants agreed that the nature of the problem can be understood in relation to the four themes presented in the evidence brief: 1) Latin America faces a heavy (but inconsistently measured) burden of childhood cancer morbidity and mortality; 2) access to childhood cancer care is inconsistent and limited, with significant differences in outcomes within and between countries; 3) there is a need for more coordinated system-wide practices and policies to strengthen childhood cancer control in Latin America as part of broader efforts to improve child health and strengthen health systems; and 4) childhood cancer receives limited attention from policymakers despite its importance for reducing childhood mortality and improving health over the life course. In relation to these dimensions of the problem, participants focused on three overarching themes: 1) limited context-specific and comparative evidence constrains policy and program development; 2) the gap between knowing what policy responses are needed and implementing them; and 3) lack of awareness of childhood cancer as a pressing health-system issue has limited both the scope and effectiveness of collective action at national, regional and international levels.
Deliberation about next steps

Four priorities for action emerged from participants during the deliberations about next steps that could be taken by different constituencies. These included: 1) building advocacy efforts for strengthening national childhood cancer care; 2) generating data and evidence; 3) fostering stakeholder engagement; and 4) building a pan-regional task force. Participants framed these next steps as complementary initiatives that should be pursued in tandem. Specific activities cited as interdependent included: linking all elements of a solution (i.e., task force activities, health-system guidance, monitoring and evaluation) to advocacy strategies; developing a matrix of childhood cancer system development to guide knowledge creation and assist with advocacy efforts; and the need to augment the involvement of key stakeholders in priority next steps, most notably task force planning and execution.

Dialogue deliverables

To learn more about this topic, consult the evidence brief that was presented to participants before the dialogue, the summary of the dialogue, and view or listen to the interviews with dialogue participants. For an electronic copy of the evidence brief or dialogue summary, or to view or listen to the interviews, visit our website www.mcmasterhealthforum.com and click on ‘Products’ along the sidebar, or for direct access to our YouTube channel, simply click on the icons below.