



SWOG Latin America Initiative NEWSLETTER

Strengthening Relationships for Latino Patients with Cancer

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SWOG | CANCER
RESEARCH
NETWORK
THE HOPE
FOUNDATION
FOR CANCER RESEARCH

LETTER FROM THE SLAI COORDINATING TEAM

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest issue of the **SWOG Latin America Initiative (SLAI) Newsletter**. Each issue of this newsletter reminds me how much this initiative has grown, not only in the number of participating studies, but also in the strength of the relationships that make these collaborations possible. As we reflect on the past six months (and, in the *SLAI Updates on pg. 3*, over the astounding progress over the past 6 years), I am proud of the momentum, growth, and collaborative spirit that continue to strengthen our network across Latin America and the United States.

This spring, we were delighted to host another successful SLAI Symposium during the SWOG Spring Group Meeting, focused on strengthening genitourinary (GU) cancer collaborations across Latin America. Co-chaired by Dr. Nora Sobrevilla (*Instituto Nacional de Cancerología, INCan, Mexico*) and me, the session brought together investigators from throughout the region and SWOG GU leadership to exchange ideas, identify new opportunities for collaboration, and continue building a shared vision for international cancer research.

Beyond the symposium, SLAI has continued to make meaningful progress. Our sites remain actively engaged in protocol development, trial participation, and scientific collaborations across multiple disease areas. We have continued to strengthen relationships among investigators, research staff, and institutional partners while identifying new opportunities to expand access to high-quality



**SLAI Coordinating Team
Leads: Mariana Chávez
Mac Gregor, MD; Dacia
Christin, MPH**



“
*As always, this
progress is only
possible because of
the dedication of our
investigators, research
coordinators, clinical
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”

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clinical research throughout the region. I had the opportunity to share our vision, mission, and some of our accomplishments and areas of opportunity during the 2026 Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos (February 2026, San Antonio, Texas) as I was invited as a keynote speaker delivering the talk "Bridging International and National Latino Research to Serve its Populations."

In this issue, we highlight several of these efforts. You will find two articles focused on GU collaborations, providing insights into ongoing initiatives and future directions for research in this important area. We also share SLAI program updates, showcasing recent accomplishments and activities across our network. In addition, we are pleased to feature a profile of Zdenka Zlatar, Lead Oncology Research Professional (LORP) in Chile, whose dedication and leadership have contributed significantly to the success of clinical research operations at her site and throughout the SLAI community.

We are also excited to look ahead to an important upcoming event: the SWOG-INCan "Precision Oncology Frameworks: Research, Methods, and Data" Conference, which will be held at INCan in Mexico City from August 12-14, 2026. Organized in

collaboration with our valued partners at INCan, this meeting will bring together investigators, clinicians, and researchers to explore advances in precision oncology, research methodology, and data science. We look forward to the opportunities this conference will provide to strengthen collaborations and foster new scientific initiatives across the region.

As always, this progress is only possible because of the dedication of our investigators, research coordinators, clinical teams, institutional leaders, and partners. Your commitment continues to demonstrate the tremendous value of international collaboration in improving cancer research and patient care.

We hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for your ongoing support of the SWOG Latin America Initiative. Together, we continue to build a stronger foundation for impactful research, innovation, and collaboration for the benefit of all patients with cancer.

Warm regards,

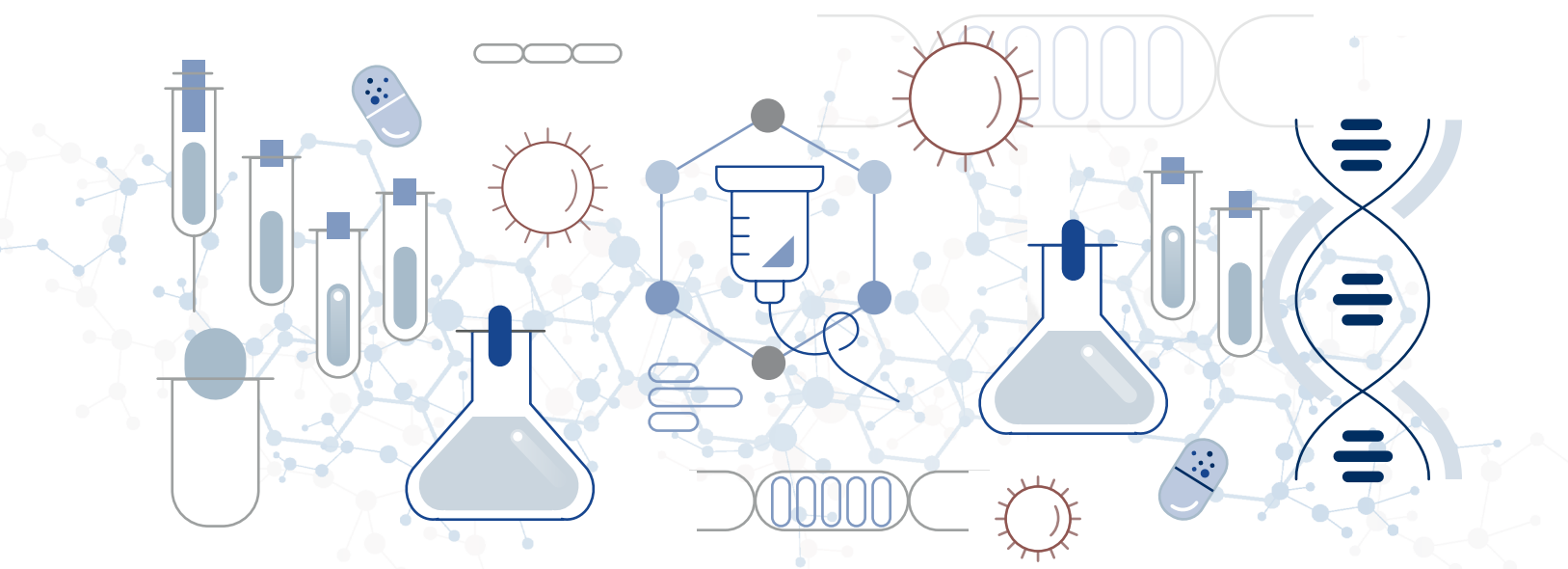


Mariana Chávez Mac Gregor,
Executive Officer for International
Affairs, and the SLAI Team

**WANT TO
LEARN
MORE?**



The SWOG Latin America Initiative coordinating team and the *Instituto Nacional de Cancerología* (INCan) in Mexico are coordinating a conference in Mexico City, 12-14 August, titled "*Precision Oncology Frameworks: Research, Methods, and Data*." Presentations will be in English or Spanish. You are invited to attend in-person or virtually. Register here <https://bit.ly/4tGGI3o>. (registration page is in Spanish; residents outside of Mexico are encouraged to select the scholarship option).



SLAI UPDATES

A recent review of the SLAI portfolio identified 25 studies that have been approved for SLAI participation since 2020, and several more studies may be approved soon. From 2010 to 2019, only four SWOG studies had SLAI accrual, and generally, only one study was ever accruing at a time. This represents remarkable growth for the initiative. Today, SWOG member sites across Latin America have access to a diverse portfolio of studies spanning multiple disease committees.

The table at the bottom of the page summarizes the current status of these studies, including which countries were approved for activation and which sites remain in the activation process.

Although nearly 30 studies have been approved for SLAI participation since 2020, approval does not always result in activation. Some studies ultimately prove infeasible because of local regulatory requirements, evolving standards of

care, protocol-specific operational challenges, or study closure before all approvals are obtained. These studies are highlighted in rose in the accompanying table.

The countries highlighted in rose in the accompanying table represent studies for which sites completed the International Participation Request Form but ultimately were unable to activate. For many studies where the country is rose, barriers were identified only after the feasibility

assessment had been completed. Common reasons included lack of approval from national regulatory authorities, changes in the local standard of care during the activation process, protocol requirements ended up not being feasible within local clinical workflow practice (such as narrow assessment/treatment time windows), or study closure before all regulatory approvals could be obtained.

The accompanying bar chart illustrates SWOG-credited accrual from SLAI sites over the past year. *Instituto Nacional de Cancerología* (INCan) in Mexico took the lead, recruiting more participants to trials this past year than all other

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NCTN AND NCORP STUDIES APPROVED FOR SWOG LATIN AMERICAN PARTICIPATION AT SWOG INSTITUTIONS FROM 2020-2026

STUDIES	DISEASE COMMITTEE	COUNTRIES	KEY
S1501	Palliative/Breast	Chile, Peru	BLACK: Activated in CTSU BLUE: In activation process PINK: Not activated/ Unable to activate after participation request approved
S1703	Cancer care delivery/Breast	Chile, Peru, Uruguay	
S1714	Symptom management	Chile, Colombia, Mexico	
S1802	GU	Chile, Colombia, Mexico	
S1827	Lung	Chile, Colombia, Mexico	
S1931	GU	Chile, Mexico, Uruguay	
S2010	Symptom management and quality of life	Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Uruguay	
S2104	GI	Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay	
S2209	Myeloma	Colombia	
S2212	Breast	Chile, Mexico	
S2308	Lymphoma	Colombia, Mexico, Peru	
S2312	GU	Chile, Mexico	
S2505	Early therapeutics and rare cancers	Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Uruguay	
A012303	Breast	Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay	
A022101	GI	Chile, Colombia, Mexico	
CCTG-PR26	GU	Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay	
EA1151	Prevention/Breast	Chile, Colombia, Mexico	
EA2185	GU	Peru	
EA2197	GI	Chile, Mexico	
EA4232	Lymphoma	Colombia, Mexico	
EA8134	GU	Colombia, Mexico	
NRG-BR008	Breast	Chile, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay	
NRG-BR009	Breast	Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay	
NRG-GY019	GYN	Chile, Peru, Uruguay	
NRG-HN009	Head and Neck	Chile, Mexico	



UPDATES FROM PAGE 3

sites combined. Please note that participants who register on some trials but are ineligible for the second registration step only receive partial credit, hence the decimals for some studies. This also means that many sites actually recruited far more patients than these credits reveal.

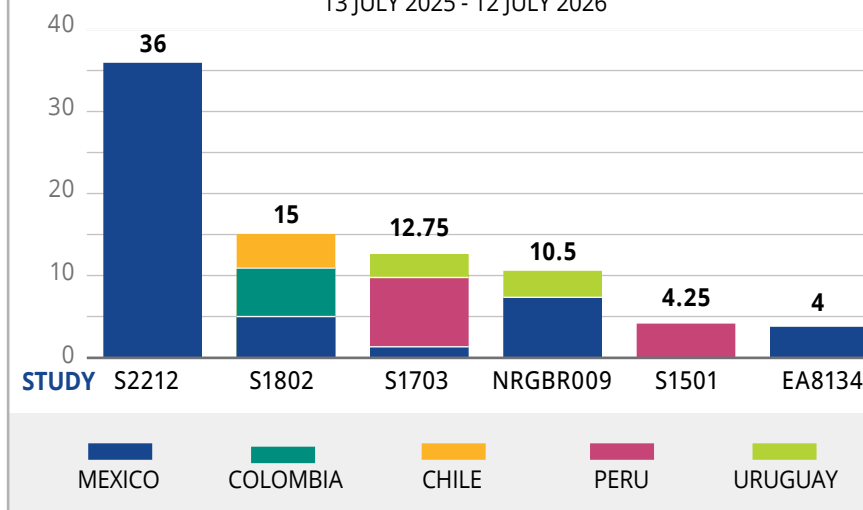
Accrual was temporarily slowed during the summer of 2025 while the NCI reviewed administrative agreements governing international participation. Enrollment has since resumed and continues to grow as additional studies open across the region. Although this pause slowed accrual during 2025, enrollment has continued to recover as additional studies have opened across the region.

Current accrual is concentrated in disease committees where SLAI investigators have established particularly strong collaborations, most notably breast and genitourinary cancers. As more recently activated studies begin enrolling participants, we anticipate continued growth in international accrual over the coming year.

Looking ahead, several studies have recently opened across the SLAI network, although most of these activations are still too recent to be reflected in the current accrual figures.

SWOG-CREDITED ACCRUAL BY COUNTRY

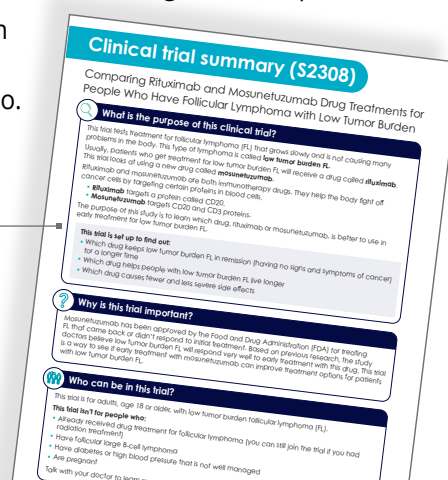
13 JULY 2025 - 12 JULY 2026



- **S1931** (*metastatic renal cell carcinoma*) — Activated at INCan, Mexico.
- **CCTG-PR26** (*metastatic castration-sensitive prostate cancer*) — Activated at INCan, Mexico, and Hospital de Clínicas, Uruguay.
- **EA4232** (*peripheral T-cell lymphoma*) — Activated at INCan, Mexico.
- **NRG-BR009** (*ER+/HER2-negative breast cancer*) — Recently began enrolling at the Hospital de Clínicas, Uruguay, joining Mexico.

One additional milestone deserves special recognition. **S2308**, *Randomized Phase III Study of Mosunetuzumab versus Rituximab for Low Tumor Burden Follicular Lymphoma*. It is the first investigational new drug (IND)

trial to include SLAI participation within SWOG, representing an important proof of concept for future industry-supported international studies. With accrual expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2027, sites are now racing to complete regulatory approvals and import study drug. The collaboration and support provided by Genentech have been instrumental in making this effort possible.



WANT TO
LEARN
MORE?

Join us to learn more about the rare cancer landscape in Latin America and discuss collaborations at the SWOG Latin America symposium on October 8, 2026, 9:00-10:30am, during the SWOG fall group meeting.

Unable to join in person? A virtual option will be available when group meeting registration opens in August 2026.

All SWOG members are invited!

ZDENKA ZLATAR – A STEADY HAND AT THE CHILEAN COOPERATIVE ONCOLOGY GROUP

For more than a decade, Zdenka Zlatar has been a driving force behind monitoring and coordination efforts in clinical research at The Chilean Cooperative Oncology Group (known as GOCCHI, its acronym, in Spanish). As SWOG's main member site and cooperative group in Chile, GOCCHI brings new cancer trials to its member hospitals and reduces the administrative and operational burden on clinical investigators. This approach makes clinical trials more feasible in a context where investigators have little or no dedicated research time.

As the Lead Oncology Research Professional (LORP) for SWOG, Zdenka brings the valuable combination of technical expertise, compassion for patients, and unwavering commitment to the integrity of academic research. But her path into the world of oncology trials was not linear.

Originally from Antofagasta in the north of Chile, Zdenka built her life and career in Santiago after arriving for her final-year internship as a clinical nutritionist. She spent more than 25 years working in major public hospitals and clinics in Santiago. "At that time, I saw more digestive surgeries, but I didn't see many oncology patients," she recalled. Her life changed course after the birth of her son. The demands of shift work became incompatible with caring for a small child, and she transitioned into part-time work supporting a physician treating patients with obesity. It was there, in the mid-1990s, that she first encountered clinical research. An obesity study arrived at the clinic, and Zdenka found herself unexpectedly drawn to the rigor and purpose of health research: "I started to like research, and the new perspective it provided." That experience sparked a curiosity that would eventually reshape her career.

Years later, encouraged by monitors who recognized her motivation for

**Zdenka
Zlatar**



ensuring data quality in research, she enrolled in the University of Chile's diploma program in clinical research. When she needed a site for her practicum, she approached Dr. Bettina Müller, SWOG's Principal Investigator, at GOCCHI—an encounter that opened the door to the world of oncology research.

Her early work included the landmark ATLAS trial, which helped change global guidelines for tamoxifen treatment duration for patients with breast cancer. "That's when we started playing in the big leagues," she remembered. "Our team started growing...and I started getting more experience and knowledge."

Today, as SWOG Lead Oncology Research Professional at GOCCHI, Zdenka's role spans coordination, regulatory oversight, and hands on support for hospital based coordinators across multiple public centers. Her days are spent navigating complex logistics, ensuring data quality, supporting investigators, and helping trial sites

overcome the challenges of conducting international research in resource limited settings. "I am the support for the work that the coordinators are doing in the hospitals" she explained. "I am not internal to the hospital. When I am onsite, I must be accompanied a doctor who works there, but we manage to get things done."

Her work is demanding: regulatory submissions to the *Instituto de Salud Pública* (Chile's national regulatory authority), ethics committee communications, monitoring when appropriate, and constant problem-solving across institutions with different rules and constraints. Yet she approaches each challenge with persistence. One of the greatest hurdles, she notes, is financial sustainability for GOCCHI: "We can get through the studies...but it is always tight."

What keeps her going after so many years? She speaks with pride about contributing to global evidence that improves cancer care: "We have managed to find a way to improve patient lives...this is important work." Plus, she likes research, even if each center's contribution is just a "few grains of sand" to a large, multi-centric study. She is committed to ensuring that Chilean patients can access cutting-edge trials, and she values the support that the SLAI coordinators have provided to each other over the years. It awes her that she is contributing to trials that are open in countries like Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay, Peru, and the United States.

Outside of work, Zdenka finds balance in creativity and movement. She practices Pilates, crochets sweaters and blouses, and enjoys making sugar-free desserts.

Zdenka's dedication has strengthened GOCCHI's capacity, supported investigators in Chile, and helped bring SWOG's mission to life in Latin America. In her own words, "Our work benefits people, the world over."

GROWING GENITOURINARY COLLABORATIONS ACROSS THE SWOG LATIN AMERICA INITIATIVE

What began with one or two Latin American sites enrolling patients to SWOG S1802 has evolved into an active network of investigators contributing to genitourinary (GU) clinical trials, disease committee activities, and scientific collaboration across the SLAI. Over the past year, increasing participation in NCTN trials has been accompanied by growing engagement in scientific discussions, demonstrating the value of sustained international collaboration.

Several GU studies have highlighted this increased energy. Sites at the *Instituto Nacional del Cáncer* (INC, Chile), *Instituto Nacional de Cancerología* (INC, Colombia), and the *Instituto Nacional de Cancerología* (INCan, Mexico) have been among the strongest contributors to SWOG S1802, *Phase III Randomized Trial of Standard Systemic Therapy (SST) Versus Standard Systemic Therapy Plus Definitive Treatment (Surgery or Radiation) of the Primary Tumor in Metastatic Prostate Cancer*, but discussions in the past year have resulted in increased local recruitment efforts. The GU team at the INC in Colombia meets weekly to review patients who might be eligible for this study, and GOCCHI in Chile will soon expand the trial to another subaffiliate member site.

Dr. Seth Lerner commented: “The sustained participation of our Latin American centers has been instrumental in maintaining enrollment in S1802 and demonstrates the important role international partnerships can play in completing practice-changing clinical trials.” To date, Chile has enrolled 9 patients, Colombia 10 patients and Mexico 41 patients to this trial.

More recently, SWOG S2312, *A Phase III Study of Cabazitaxel with or Without Carboplatin in Patients with Metastatic Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer (mCRPC), Stratified by Aggressive Variant Signature*, opened in Mexico. In June 2026, the Canadian Cancer Trials Group study PR-26, Triple Switch, also activated in Mexico and Uruguay and should activate soon in Colombia and Chile.

Recognizing the growing contribution of Latin American SWOG Member sites, GU Committee Chair Dr. Lerner appointed Dr. Sumanta “Monty” Pal as SWOG’s International Liaison for the GU Committee following the 2025 SWOG Fall Group Meeting. The role reflects an increasing commitment to strengthening partnerships with investigators outside the United



States and ensuring that international perspectives are incorporated into the committee’s activities.

To support these efforts, Dr. Pal began leading monthly GU collaboration meetings that bring together investigators and GU leaders from Latin America with SWOG GU leadership. Initially involving teams from Mexico and Chile, participation quickly expanded to include investigators from Colombia and Peru. These meetings provide a forum to discuss trial portfolios, review enrollment trends, identify regulatory and operational barriers, and help shape future collaborative opportunities. SWOG study chairs are regularly invited

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BUILDING THE FUTURE OF GU CANCER RESEARCH AT THE SLAI SYMPOSIUM

The momentum behind international genitourinary (GU) cancer collaborations was on display during the Latin America Symposium at the 2026 SWOG Spring Group Meeting in San Francisco. Building on the collaborative foundation established over the past several years, investigators from across Latin America and the SWOG GU committee came together to discuss the opportunities and challenges in developing GU studies that better reflect the realities of cancer care throughout Latin America.

Dr. Nora Sobrevilla (*Instituto Nacional de Cancerología, INCan, Mexico*) opened the scientific session with an overview of prostate cancer disparities across Latin America. Although prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men throughout the region, significant differences in stage at diagnosis, access to multidisciplinary care, radiotherapy, systemic therapies, and clinical trials continue to influence patient outcomes. These disparities underscore the

importance of ensuring that clinical research addresses the needs of diverse healthcare systems and patient populations.

Expanding on this theme, Dr. Regina Barragán (*INCan, Mexico*) discussed research priorities for advanced renal cell carcinoma in resource-variable settings. Emphasizing the need for research that reflects local realities, she noted that “we need to move from global evidence adoption to local evidence generation.” Rather than

simply applying evidence generated elsewhere, she highlighted the importance of building regional research capacity through local registries, pragmatic clinical trials, investigator training, and studies designed around questions that are directly relevant to patients in Latin America. Her message reinforced the theme of the symposium: meaningful collaboration requires generating evidence alongside Latin American investigators, not merely extending existing research into new regions.

The third speaker, Dr. Seth Lerner, Chair of the SWOG GU committee, presented several ongoing and upcoming SWOG GU trials with strong Latin American participation and opportunities for future collaborations. Throughout his presentation, Dr. Lerner emphasized the committee’s commitment to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



The SWOG Latin American participants at the group meeting in May 2026

engaging Latin American investigators early in study development and encouraged continued dialogue to identify and address operational barriers before they become obstacles to participation.

This collaborative approach has already begun to yield tangible results (also see pg. 3). Trials such as S1802, S1931, S2312, EA8134, and the CCTG-PR26 study are providing new opportunities for Latin American institutions to contribute to practice-changing research while helping investigators identify practical solutions to challenges involving regulatory approval, specimen logistics, and access to standard therapies.

The discussion that followed perhaps best illustrated how SWOG's partnerships with Latin America

have evolved. Investigators openly exchanged ideas on adapting trial procedures, improving communication between study teams, and identifying ways to make future protocols more feasible across diverse healthcare settings. The conversation focused on how regional investigators can help shape studies from their earliest stages, ensuring that future research is both scientifically rigorous and globally applicable.

The story of GU collaboration within the SLAI continues to evolve. With expanding investigator engagement, increasing institutional capacity, and a shared commitment to advancing clinically meaningful research, SWOG sites in Latin America are becoming an increasingly important partner. Together, we are building a collaborative research community that is creating new opportunities for scientific discovery and improved patient care throughout the Americas.

**WANT TO
LEARN
MORE?**

Sign into the SWOG website to view the full GU collaboration discussion at the SWOG Latin America symposium from Friday, May 1. It is linked from the list of [SWOG spring 2026 group meeting recordings](#).

“The enthusiasm and scientific engagement of our Latin American colleagues have created new opportunities for collaboration and strengthened the future of international GU clinical research in the SWOG network.”

— Dr. Sumanta “Monty” Pal

GENITOURINARY FROM PAGE 6

to present ongoing studies, answer questions from participating sites, and discuss upcoming protocols that may be suitable for activation in the region. Dr. Pal reflected on these meetings, stating: “The enthusiasm and scientific engagement of our Latin American colleagues have created new opportunities for collaboration and strengthened the future of international GU clinical research in the SWOG network.”

Current participants in the SLAI monthly GU meetings include:

- Dr. Nora Sobrevilla
(INCan, Mexico)

- Dr. Regina Barragán
(INCan, Mexico)
- Dr. Roberto Estay (GOCCHI, Chile)
- Dr. Sebastián Iñiguez (INC, Chile)
- Dr. Patricia Riojas (INEN, Peru)
- Dr. Juan Pablo Usubillaga
(INC, Colombia)
- Dr. Rodolfo Varela
(INC, Colombia)

The collaboration has also fostered deeper scientific engagement. Drs. Sobrevilla, Barragán, and Estay have joined SWOG GU subcommittees, strengthening Latin American representation

in protocol development and committee discussions. As additional institutions activate GU studies and investigators become involved in disease committee activities, the SLAI continues to build a network that extends beyond trial participation. As the network continues to grow, Latin American investigators are becoming collaborators in the scientific direction of GU research in SWOG—not simply participants in individual studies. These partnerships expand access to innovative clinical trials while improving the relevance and global applicability of the evidence generated for patients with GU cancers.