CANCER CONTROL IN AFRICA – SHARING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH NETWORKS

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Cancer still poses significant challenge in Africa.

Exchange of information, skills and expertise among cancer care providers, funders and policy makers are necessary platforms for control.

Networking stimulates interest and reduces the knowledge gap in cancer care and control.
African region is predicted to have a greater than 85% increase in cancer burden by 2030.

Approaches to minimize the burden of cancer in sub-Saharan Africa in the past few years have had little success.

A strategic approach to cancer control in sub-Saharan Africa is needed to build on what works and what is unique to the region.

- Morhason-Bello et al, Lancet Oncology, April 2013; 14(4), e142-e151
BACKGROUND...

- There is a drastic shortage of accessible knowledge and quality training programs in Africa for comprehensive cancer control.

- The local capacity to train and mentor practitioners within the region is not sufficient to ensure sustainable cancer control and to counter the effects of brain drain in this field of expertise.

- Combined with a lack of financial resources, this scarcity of training opportunities has resulted in a great shortage of trained professionals in health care, particularly in cancer control and treatment.
There are however islands of hope and functional units within Africa and north-south collaborative networks that offer hope to continental efforts to promote prevention, care and control of cancer.

Sharing available knowledge within the region with international community through the collaborative networks offers greater impact in cancer control.

Tapping into these networks requires political will, support and action as well-coordinated approaches to maximize potentials that abound.
Cognitive Knowledge Networks

It's not who you know.
It's what who you know knows.

Source: Newsweek, December 2000
The complexity of work in today’s world is such that no one can understand – let alone complete – a task alone

- Individual by individual
- Team by team
- Institutions by institutions

- Strong networks are correlated with health:
  - People with stronger personal networks are healthier, happier, and better performers
  - Institutions who know how to manage alliances are more flexible, adaptive and resilient

Knowledge flows along existing pathways in organizations.

To understand the knowledge flow, find out what the patterns are.

Create interventions to create, reinforce, or change the patterns to improve the knowledge flow.

WHY DO ACTORS CREATE, MAINTAIN, DISSOLVE, AND RECONSTITUTE NETWORK LINKS?

- Theories of self-interest
- Theories of social and resource exchange
- Theories of mutual interest and collective action

- Theories of contagion
- Theories of balance
- Theories of homophily
- Theories of proximity
- Theories of co-evolution

Sources:
SOME ACTIVE ORGANISATIONS

- African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC),
- Africa Oxford Cancer Foundation (AfrOx),
- European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)
- Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)
- International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)
- National Cancer Institute (NCI)-USA,FRANCE,BRAZIL
- American Cancer Society (ACS)
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER STRATEGY OF UICC

- The goal of “Knowledge Transfer” is to narrow the gap between what is known and what is applied in cancer control by
  - facilitating research and training fellowships for health care and advocacy professionals and volunteers;
  - maintaining a global network of cancer experts;
  - providing fora for information exchange;
  - publishing a range of journals, manuals, and other material for health care professionals; and
  - promoting specific activities that advance the cancer control agenda.
The process of knowledge sharing is complex and involves cultural and organizational dimensions.

The nature of the information or knowledge to be exchanged determines the possibilities of success of this process.

Networking reduces barriers of organization, culture, trust, incentives, and technology in information dissemination.

Transference of knowledge from one entity to another and within entities facilitate balancing of ideas and monitoring/evaluation of interventions.
EXISTING NETWORKS…

- **International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR)**
- **African Cancer Registry Network (AFRCN)**

  AFCRN aims to improve the effectiveness of cancer surveillance in sub-Saharan Africa by providing expert evaluation of current problems and technical support to remedy identified barriers, with long-term goals of strengthening health systems and creating research platforms for the identification of problems, priorities, and targets for intervention.

- **International Cancer Control Partnership**
  - a group of international organisations engaged in supporting country cancer control planning efforts
  - committed to ensuring that member organisations effectively work together to achieve a well-resourced, quality cancer control plan, integrated with non-communicable disease control efforts
OTHER NETWORKS

- VUCCNet
- The Program of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT)
  - IAEA project
- Cancer training and mentorship networks.
- AORTIC-NCI(3)-AFROX PARTNERSHIP
- AORTIC-PATHOLOGY NETWORK
KEY ISSUES IN KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- **Articulation** – proper packaging of available information; transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge
- **Awareness** – identification of knowledge gaps and available options
- **Access** – removal of limitations and barriers
- **Guidance** – to avoid information overload, and to provide easy access to appropriate material
- **Completeness** – holistic approach to information dissemination
APPROACHES FOR NETWORKING

- Building a community infrastructure to reduce cancer health disparities.
  - Experience from the Deep South Network (DSN)
  - Dissemination and translation of proven interventions into practice to reduce cancer burden and disparities
  - Establishment of population-based cancer registration system

- Digitalization of the information so it becomes readily available for re-use by others
  - IT-enabled networking
  - address shortage of information by using modern pedagogical IT-assisted methodology and e-learning in addition to traditional teaching approaches
Web-based cancer course and webinar series to bring together relevant health service providers

- on-line learning courses that reflect the latest evidence and leading practices offers around-the-clock access to a virtual support network
- enhances quality of care at a local level
- reduces the sense of isolation of healthcare providers in rural and remote communities
- supports care decisions that are relevant and responsive to community needs

- Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
- **Capacity building** – providing technical assistance, training, research and financial support
  - Linkage formation by cancer advocacy groups

- **Integration** of cancer control programs to established disease control programs

- **Use of the Social Media for information dissemination, Working and Informal Learning**
BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

- Early identification of challenges to achievement of goals and objectives
- Emerging trends in cancer control are easily identified
- Monitoring and evaluation of in-country projects
- Cost-effectiveness
- Fast-track knowledge sharing
Cancer control in Africa is strategic to the reduction of worldwide disease burden.

Collaboration with existing networks will provide good platform for synergizing our efforts to achieve greater impact.
Regional cancer centres

- Western Africa
- Central Africa
- Southern Africa
- Eastern Africa
Distribution of the Regional Thematic Institutes and its centres

- Institute I
- Institute II
- Institute III
- Institute IV
- Institute V

Lead Thematic Partner (LTP) Germany African Diaspora (AD)

Proposal LTP Japan/AD
Proposal LTP India/AD
Proposal Eumetsat EU countries/AD
Proposal LTP Sweden/AD
Cancer Control in Africa 1

Challenges and opportunities in cancer control in Africa: a perspective from the African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer

Imran O Morhason-Bello, Folakemi Odedina, Timothy R Rebbeck, Joe Harford, Jean-Marie Dangou, Lynette Denny, Isaac F Adewole

Cancer Control in Africa 2

Improvement of pathology in sub-Saharan Africa

Adekunle Adesina, David Chumba, Ann M Nelson, Jackson Orem, Drucilla J Roberts, Henry Wabinga, Michael Wilson, Timothy R Rebbeck

Cancer Control in Africa 5

Improving access to analgesic drugs for patients with cancer in sub-Saharan Africa

Megan O'Brien, Faith Mwangi-Powell, Isaac F Adewole, Olaitan Soyannwo, Jacinto Amandua, Elizabeth Ogaja, Mary Okpeseyi, Zipporah Ali, Rose Kiwanuka, Anne Merriman
THANK YOU