Making Radiotherapy a Global Health Priority through Social Media Mobilization

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Conflict of Interest: None Declared
Outline

- Redefining radiotherapy within the global health context

- Introducing GlobalRT
  - Goals, projects, and initiatives
  - Multimedia approaches

- Sustaining a global health movement for radiotherapy
A Brief History of Time: 

The Story of Radiotherapy

1915: Early Clinical Applications

- X-ray apparatus used for treatment of skin cancers

1957: The Birth of Modern Radiotherapy

- First patient treated with a linear accelerator
Radiotherapy Today

- Used in half of all malignancies
- Effective for cure and palliation of symptoms
- Widespread availability; current focus on improving utilization
- New advances on the horizon
The Story of Radiotherapy

Access to Radiotherapy (Delivery/Need): 2015 Projections

Complete Access

% Access

No Access

Upper Middle Income  Lower Middle Income  Low Income

IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency

GTFRCC UICC President's Portfolio: Global Task Force on Radiotherapy for Cancer Control
The Story of No Radiotherapy
## How Do We Change the Story?

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The Misconception

RADIOThERAPY too costly?

WHAT WE DO

GlobalRT is a movement to turn radiotherapy into a global health priority. As an initiative of the Young Leaders Program of the Global Task Force on Radiotherapy for Cancer Control (GTFRCC), it will provide a virtual platform for education, exchange, and action around the essential nature of radiotherapy for cancer care.

read more

ABOUT CANCER

Cancer is a global problem. Of the roughly seven million cancer deaths that occur worldwide, approximately 70% of these are in low and middle-income countries. The majority of 27 million new cancer cases and 17 million cancer deaths that will occur by 2020 will also fall on resource-limited nations.

read more

RADIOThERAPY

Radiotherapy is an essential component of comprehensive cancer care. More than half of all patients with cancer will require radiation as all or part of their treatment, often in combination with surgery and chemotherapy. Radiation treats cancer by destroying the genetic material in rapidly growing cancer cells.

read more

JOIN AND CONNECT

Want to join the movement for access to radiation therapy for cancer patients across the globe?

Sign Up

GLOBAL PARTNERS & PROJECTS

Here you can use our interactive map database

View Map
The Dissemination of Knowledge

THE FACTS

Cancer is a Leading Cause of Death in Low-Income Countries

- CANCER kills more people than HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB combined.

Radiotherapy Resources are Limited in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

- Latin America: Only 5 of 19 countries have more than 1 machine per million people.
- Asia/Pacific: Only the four best developed countries have more than 2 machines per million people.
- Africa: 84% of Radiotherapy units are concentrated in just 5 of 52 countries, 29 countries do not have a unit at all.

Radiotherapy is Effective

- Helps prevent cancer-related complications
- Quality of life
- Treatment of pain/palliative care

Is Radiotherapy too Costly?

- After a large initial investment, the cost of maintaining radiotherapy equipment and facilities becomes relatively low and stable. Over time, the cost per treatment diminishes greatly.

THE CHALLENGES

Training and Personnel

- Low- and Middle-Income Countries are less likely to have qualified personnel.
- Some countries have shown that, with minimal investment and/or grants, regional joint training/treatment facilities can be effective at producing skilled employees.

New Technologies

- Technological advancements have made radiotherapy treatments more precise and less toxic.
- Resources also need to be channeled into addressing Low- and Middle-Income Countries’ needs, such as producing quality machines that are less expensive, require less maintenance and/or function reliably and effectively with less power.

Build Awareness

- Awareness leads to solutions. We all now know mosquito nets help to prevent malaria. Money raised to fight prostate cancer increased dramatically with the Movember campaign. Global awareness campaigns led to investment in, and strategies for dealing with HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Global Voice

- Cancer and the benefits of radiotherapy must be treated as a global responsibility.
The Call to Action

Both Cancer Cases and Cancer Related Death are on the Rise

The WHO estimates a 70% increase in the number of cancer cases diagnosed over the next two decades, which could reach as many as 24 million world-wide by 2035.

While half of new cancer cases occur in developing regions, those regions account for nearly two-thirds of cancer-related deaths.

Radiotherapy is Essential

Radiotherapy is recommended in 52% of new cancer cases, not to mention its role in pain and palliative care.

Reductions in mortality rate have been shown to have direct positive impact on economic growth in Low- and Middle-income Countries.
Treatment Narratives

Veronica: A Peruvian Story of Cancer, and Health
Fighting Cancer with Numbers

September 5, 2014 / by the GlobalRT team

What do you mean by that?

Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, says the major challenge to cancer control is to understand how much. How many cancers are there in each country? How well is the cancer control system performing? Answering these questions can help us draw insights into cancers in many individuals and situations. This information is crucial to making decisions about how to allocate limited resources.

Kevin Tan, a radiation oncology registrar working in Gippsland, Australia and creator of this short film, had this to say about the film:

“I've found that some of the most meaningful work we can do is often also the most humble. Combating cancer on a global scale needn't be pioneering stuff, nor is it particularly sexy. It begins simply by counting, by framing the fight as a battle with numbers.”
Connectivity and Collaboration
Connectivity and Collaboration

Partners:

- **Professional Societies**: ESTRO (Europe), Young DEGRO (Germany), CARO (Canada), ASTRO (USA), SFRO (France), AROI (India), RANZCR (Australia/New Zealand)

- **Civil society groups**: Targeting Cancer, Global Oncology Initiative (GO!), NCDFree, Radiating Hope, UICC

Etc…
Web

**GlobalRT: building a new radiotherapy community**

“When a woman gets cancer, it’s not just a patient—it’s a family”. These powerful words of Tatiana Vidaurre, in a film entitled Veronica: a Peruvian Story of Cancer and Health, highlight the urgent need for global access to radiotherapy and other optimal cancer care. The film introduces us to Veronica, a young mother with cancer, receiving radiation treatment in Lima. Through the eyes of Veronica and Vidaurre, director of the National Cancer Institute in Peru, we see how the context, the person, and of this problem is amplified by the projected 54% increase in global cancer incidence by 2030, with the steepest rise in countries of low and middle income. Radiotherapy is indicated in the treatment of roughly half of all cancer patients in high-income countries, and in an even greater proportion in countries of low and middle income, where advanced presentations of cancer are more common. However, as data from the International Atomic Energy Agency shows, radiotherapy is still committed to making radiotherapy universally available: the Young Leaders Program will ensure that the long-term goals of the GTFRCC are accomplished.

The young leaders are also key contributors to the GTFRCC working groups, participating in framework development and providing results that will be used in the GTFRCC report. Their involvement provides them with a unique opportunity to receive valuable mentorship from leaders in global health and cancer care. Mentors
Conclusions

- Change in health care is a complex **process** that involves:
  - Scientific evidence
  - Restructuring of health systems
  - Community mobilization

- Competing interests make it challenging to know how and where to invest scarce resources.

- **GlobalRT** is a tool to build a **social consensus** to promote the equitable distribution of radiotherapy.
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All of our partners!

Join Our Growing GlobalRT Community!