

CANCER INFORMATION IN LOW & MEDIUM INCOME COUNTRIES (LMICS)

Questions

Estimated size of the cancer problem

- In absolute terms.
- Relative to other health problems.
- Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) mortality.
- Socio-economical impact.
- Financial burden.

Perception of the problem

- At international level.
- By local (LMICs) government:
 - Relevance in the overall health policies.
 - Size of resources allotted.
- International organisations (WHO, IOM etc.):
 - Dedicated provisions.
 - Special initiatives.

To what extent LMICs can cope?

- Relative to the size of the problem.
- Relative to specific types of cancer.
- Relative to the resources available.

How effective are current cancer control measures in LMICs?

- How many LMICs have cancer control plans?
- Are the plans realistic, relative to the resources available?
- Is there a measure of the outcome of cancer control plans?
- Is cancer information perceived as an important mean of controlling cancer?

Obstacles to the implementation of cancer information programmes

- Lack of recognition of relevance.
- Lack of manpower.
- Technology limitations.
- Lack of skilled personnel.
- Communication problems.

How communication & information can be improved? (Internationally)

- Public recognition of the importance of the problem by influential bodies (WHO, IOM, *etc.*).
- Adapting guidelines to local situation and needs.
- Improving the level of assistance by cancer information services of richer countries.
- Identifying more efficient means of communication.

How communication & information can be improved? (Locally)

- Creating and/or developing strong local cancer societies.
- Promoting changes that need to be made to improve education of health care professionals.
- Integration efforts by local institutions involved with education, public health and health care.
- Creation of cancer patient's associations.
- Encouraging “from patient to patient” communication.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Information is essential, not only for prevention.
- ▶ Adoption of pre-emptive measures (*e.g.*: deal with problems such as tobacco, banning of smoking in public places, reducing alcoholism, appropriate education of children, etc.).
- ▶ Cancer information services should be created *ASAP*.
- ▶ Rich countries have an important role in improving knowledge & technology.