

The Gynecologic Oncology Global Curriculum & Mentorship Program

The Challenge

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide with over 17 million new cases and 8.5 million cancer-related deaths per year. Globally, the number of deaths from cancer exceeds the number of deaths from HIV, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Global cancer rates are rising dramatically with a predicted 23.6 million new cases per year worldwide by 2030. More than 50% of all cancer cases and 65% of related deaths occur in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). In LMICs, many of these cancers are gynecologic in origin, with cervical cancer being the most predominant. While cervical cancer is now relatively uncommon in high-income countries primarily due to introduction of the Papanicolaou (Pap) test coupled with the introduction of organized screening programs, such screening and prevention programs are rare in LMICs, resulting in cervical cancer being the first or second leading cause of cancer and related deaths among women. Women in low-resource regions often present with cancer that is at an advanced stage and is difficult to treat. Unfortunately, palliative care is also frequently unavailable leading to significant suffering for the women and their families.

There is a significant shortage of health care providers in LMICs. For example, there are 2.6 physicians in Mozambique per 100,000 population compared with 247 in the US and 222 in the UK for the same population. In addition, few of the physicians in LMICs have access to specialty training and are therefore unequipped to treat the high volume of patients presenting with cancer. Many regions of the world do not have specialty training in gynecologic oncology, leaving women without the specialty care they need for the prevention and treatment of cervical cancer and other gynecologic malignancies. Given the rising rates of cancer in LMICs, there is a critical need to train and educate local physicians to address this epidemic.

A Global Approach to a Global Problem

The IGCS is launching the *Gynecologic Oncology Global Curriculum & Mentorship Program*, a comprehensive two-year education and training program designed for regions around the world that do not currently have formal training in gynecologic oncology. The program will match institutions and individuals from higher resource settings with partners in lower resource settings wishing to obtain formal gynecologic oncology training (twinning). The specific goals of the program will be to:

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive two-year web based curriculum for local gynecologic oncology training and education that can be adapted by each region/program to reflect local needs and facilities.
- Select trainees from lower resource settings (gynecologic oncology fellows) who will be paired with local mentor(s) from their home program as well as fully trained gynecologic oncologist(s) from a mentoring institution.
- Establish minimum requirements for the gynecologic oncology fellows to complete the

program and receive a certificate following an examination and completion of the two-year training program.

- Hold monthly tumor boards where the fellows and mentors review cases and participate in ongoing learning and mentoring opportunities.
- Establish a program for the international mentor(s) to travel to the fellow institution at regular intervals for hands-on surgical training and in-person teaching.
- Facilitate and support the fellows' travel to the mentoring institution for up to three months for training and education.

Pilot Sites

The following pilot sites will implement the *Global Curriculum & Mentorship Program* beginning in 2017:

- Da Nang General Hospital, Vietnam in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida, USA and the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
- Hospital Central de Maputo, Mozambique in collaboration with Barretos Cancer Hospital, Barretos, Brazil and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Texas, USA
- The University of the West Indies (Jamaica, Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago) in collaboration with the University of Miami, Florida, USA
- St. Paul's Hospital and Black Lion Hospital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in collaboration with the University of Minnesota and University of Michigan, USA and Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany
- Moi University, Moi, Kenya and the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

If successful, this program will be expanded to additional sites around the world interested in accessing specialty training in gynecologic oncology. A parallel curriculum will be developed in radiation oncology.

Why Collaborate and Partner with IGCS and How You Can Make a Difference

As we become more connected around the globe, it is increasingly necessary to build strong partnerships that are strategic and productive in nature. A strategic partnership will bring together our similarities and combine our resources of talent and knowledge, while avoiding duplication of efforts. This project will lay the groundwork for an effective gynecologic oncology training program in regions of the world that do not currently have such specialized training. By partnering with colleagues and institutions in LMICs, we will test and implement our *Global Curriculum & Mentorship Program*. With your support, we can scale up our efforts to train providers in additional areas to prevent and treat cancer globally. More than 250,000 women will die from cervical cancer this year, with over 85% of these deaths occurring in LMICs. Through the *Global Curriculum & Mentorship Program*, we can provide local physicians with access to innovative gynecologic oncology training and together we can stop this global epidemic.

Please join us in taking on this challenge.