

Corporate Responsibility

EDUCARE

Overview

The EDUCARE (**EDU**cation for Cancer in African **RE**gions) is a unique partnership between Roche and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), created to help address the significant shortage of trained healthcare workers in oncology in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through this public-private partnership, Roche aims to build on the work that the IAEA Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) has undertaken with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other international partners, as the Joint Programme on Cancer Control, to fight cancer in developing countries.

About EDUCARE

Roche and the IAEA, through the EDUCARE partnership, will combine their shared knowledge and expertise in cancer control to establish a Virtual University for Cancer Control, supported by the development of a regional African training and mentorship network, collectively called VUCCnet. This innovative pilot training programme aims to build human resource capacity through the training of healthcare professionals in Africa to combat the growing cancer epidemic.

The EDUCARE initiative represents the pilot phase of the IAEA VUCCnet project and will consist of:

- **Virtual University for Cancer Control (VUCC):** An accredited online virtual university to provide comprehensive cancer training across Africa.
- **Regional African Cancer Training network (RACT):** A training programme on-site at several cancer centres in sub-Saharan Africa

reflecting a curricula appropriate for the specific needs of the region (e.g. prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, nursing, palliative care). These centres will be part of a network which ultimately can be connected to a broader group of healthcare workers across other African countries, to help them in their own cancer control initiatives.

In 2012 the VUCCnet formed a Policy Harmonisation Framework, across all four pilot countries (Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) and two mentor countries (Egypt and South Africa) to establish governance and pave the way for creating the VUCC. The programme will initially focus on the four pilot countries and will coordinate activities and resources to help build and implement effective and sustainable cancer control programmes in these countries. The goal is to foster African knowledge development, education and training capacity in order to make comprehensive cancer control sustainable.



Key facts and figures

Cancer in the developing world

- Only 5% of global resources for cancer is spent in the developing worldⁱ, despite the fact that cancer kills more people in these countries than AIDS, TB or malariaⁱⁱ.
- By 2020, 15 million new cases of cancer are expected every year globally, 70% of which will be in developing countriesⁱⁱⁱ.
- An estimated 80% of these cancer patients have advanced disease at initial presentation^{iv}, with the childhood cancer cure rate standing at only 5%^v.
- Survival rates of one third of patients could be increased if cancer is detected earlier, but the lack of trained cancer professionals, adequate cancer care services and public awareness campaigns severely limits health system response^{iv}.

“PACT and its partners have developed the VUCCnet in order to facilitate access to more training, to allow African healthcare workers to be trained on best practices for cancer control in their home countries and regions, and to build a sustainable mentorship network for continuous professional development.”

Mr. Massoud Samiei, Director of the PACT Programme, IAEA

Aims

EDUCARE will focus on enhancing the capacity of healthcare workers in oncology by:

- Establishing four pilot centres as recognised National Centres of Competence with training in planning, administration and management of the centre. In 2012 alone, over 100 doctors and nurses registered for a cervical cancer training course, spanning all four pilot countries
- Creating a cancer training network including specialists from the Ministries of Health
- Aiding specialists from the Ministries of Health in securing better healthcare resources
- Providing a mix of training curricula for healthcare professionals in multiple aspects of cancer control, such as radiotherapy, nursing, palliative care and public health through low-cost web-based learning tools
- Augmenting cancer professionals through multi-disciplinary cancer management skills and ‘train the trainer’ programmes

Once established, it is anticipated that each Cancer Centre of Competence will facilitate access to diagnosis and cancer care for a catchment of approximately 5 million people. In the long term it is hoped that the outcomes of the EDUCARE pilot initiative in sub-Saharan Africa will be used as a model by the IAEA to roll-out across Africa and other developing regions of the world in Asia and Latin America.



Background

Cancer is now one of the leading causes of death in developing countries with more than half of all new cancer cases – and over 60% of cancer deaths – occurring in poorer regions of the world such as sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite this, only 5% of global resources for cancer are currently spent in these developing countries and up to one third of new cancer cases could be prevented with proper awareness programmes and other primary prevention measures in place. In addition, diagnosis and treatment of cancer in most developing countries are minimal and national cancer control programmes are lacking in many developing countries. While African countries will account for over a million new cancer cases a year, the lack of resources and basic infrastructure mean that most Africans have no access to cancer screening, early diagnosis, treatment or palliative care.

EDUCARE addresses the significant shortage of trained healthcare workers in oncology in Africa, building on the international effort to fight cancer in the developing world

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Partner organisation



ⁱ Breast Cancer in Developing Countries, The Lancet 2009 10:1077-85

ⁱⁱ Global Cancer Facts and Figures 2007 American Cancer Society

ⁱⁱⁱ Grey, N and Sener, S. (2006) Reducing the global cancer burden, <http://www.hospitalmanagement.net/features/feature648/>, Date accessed 21 April 2009

^{iv} World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer. World Cancer Report 2008

^v Afrox, London Declaration on Cancer Control in Africa, May 2007