

How to meet the second target of World Cancer Declaration, i.e. “Significantly Improve Measurement of Cancer Burden”?

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Burden of cancer, as one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, showed a marked increase in both developed and developing countries during last decades¹. The developing world is bearing over half of this burden. While, World Health Organization recommends planning and implementation of comprehensive cancer control program in all countries, lack of high-quality incidence and mortality data hampers effective policies for developing, implementing and evaluating cancer control programs in developing countries.

In a study on essential component of the cancer control program that is population-based cancer registries (PBCRs), researchers showed the existence of cancer registration is lacking in the developing world with large disparities in the percentage of population covered by PBCRs between high-income and low- and middle-income countries². They studied frequency and coverage of cancer registries worldwide in overall and stratified by regions and countries, using the data published in the “Cancer in Five Continents (CI5)” volume I-IX. In this study that was published in last number of Basic & Clinical Cancer Research, researchers found that the coverage of PBCRs was almost complete in the western countries; some countries particularly in Africa and Asia lack even a single cancer registry. They concluded that developing countries must prioritize establishment of cancer registration system by considering using advance information technology.

In September 2011, United Nations Member States committed to the strengthening of health information systems through population-based cancer registries, to guarantee timely interventions for the entire population.

Fortunately, Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) announced establishment of a new initiative, i.e. Global Initiative for Cancer Registries (GICR see <http://gicr.iarc.fr>) designed to empower countries to produce reliable and high-quality information on the burden of cancer, improve the quality of local data through a population-based registry approach, strengthen health information systems and facilitate planning of prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and care of cancer.

It estimates a minimum investment of US\$5 million over five years and its funding priorities in 2012 are to establish the regional hubs and build training support in the form of targeted fellowships and workshops.

References:

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- 2.Keshtmand, Gelaviz, & Kazem Zendehelel. “Fostering Population-Based Cancer Registries in Developing Countries.” Basic & Clinical Cancer Research, 3.1 (2011): 5-13.