

Cancer control-planning and monitoring population-based systems

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Abstract

Cancer is a growing global health issue, and many countries are ill-prepared to deal with their current cancer burden let alone the increased burden looming on the horizon. Growing and aging populations are projected to result in dramatic increases in cancer cases and cancer deaths particularly in low- and middle-income countries. It is imperative that planning begin now to deal not only with those cancers already occurring but also with the larger numbers expected in the future. Unfortunately, such planning is hampered, because the magnitude of the burden of cancer in many countries is poorly understood owing to lack of surveillance and monitoring systems for cancer risk factors and for the documentation of cancer incidence, survival and mortality. Moreover, the human resources needed to fight cancer effectively are often limited or lacking. Cancer diagnosis and cancer care services are also inadequate in low- and middle-income countries. Late-stage presentation of cancers is very common in these settings resulting in less potential for cure and more need for symptom man-

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agement. Palliative care services are grossly inadequate in low- and middle-income countries, and many cancer patients die unnecessarily painful deaths. Many of the challenges faced by low- and middle-income countries have been at least partially addressed by higher income countries. Experiences from around the world are reviewed to highlight the issues and showcase some possible solutions.