



OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CANCER (OERC)

CHALLENGE/SITUATION

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that cancer will become the leading cause of death in the world by the end of 2010. By 2030, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), as part of WHO, has estimated that the global burden of cancer could be as high as 17 million new cases per year; as a result, an increasing fraction of this burden will end up falling on developing countries as their populations grow. However, deficiencies in human capital and material resources and the lack of scope for capacity development (both in quantity and quality) effectively hinder any attempts in valuable cancer treatment and cancer control; thus, there is a need for education of the cancer workforce in order to control and prevent this pandemic.

APPROACH

In order to successfully educate the cancer workforce in overcoming these challenges, there needed to be learning modules and research that would enhance knowledge sharing between countries on cancer control strategies. It needed to improve the capacities of physicians, nurses, and caregivers in developing countries to treat cancer patients, and make innovative cancer research information available in an easy, accessible, and free format. Lastly, it needed a feedback mechanism that would expand and further the knowledge base.

SOLUTION

The OERC project provides open-source learning modules in the area of cancer research and training worldwide that will be available to all physicians, nursing, teaching staff, and patients. It provides free access to a repository of full courses, training and course modules, research information, and news via web wiki. Material currently used in leading medical institutions and cancer-focused organizations, both in the U.S. and abroad, will be also be used in order to enhance the user knowledge. What's more, the available learning modules will be made accessible to a select number of major cancer institutions in developing countries; these institutions will be encouraged to be both contributor and consumer in order to ensure that the OERC content is applicable in those countries.

BENEFITS

- Enhances the capacity of health policy makers, medical institutions, and hospitals and clinics to access knowledge and research cancer-related results
- Improves the ability to contribute to the global knowledge base
- Possesses the ability to control cancer in specific national contexts as recommended by resolution World Health Assembly (WHA) 88.22
- Improves access to relevant scientific literature and to training tools
- Improves diagnosis
- Improves educators' pedagogical responsibilities
- Enhances the educational experience