



Cancer in sub-Saharan Africa: *a Lancet Oncology Commission*

“We have seen too many reports, too many words, too many good intentions, too many families torn apart, and too many excruciatingly painful deaths to see yet more delays in taking collective action to accelerate cancer control in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Read the Commission and related content for free with registration at
www.thelancet.com/commissions/cancer-in-sub-Saharan-Africa

Calls for Urgent Action

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Action 1: precision cancer control planning

- Develop or update national cancer control plans and provide sustained financing, to ensure their implementation
- Metrics: implementation of the national cancer control plans
- Timeframe: within 5 years

Action 2: improving data acquisition and cancer registration

- Invest in cancer registration to provide data upon which rational cancer planning will be undertaken
- Metrics: establish and support national cancer registries
- Timeframe: within 3 years

Action 3: designing health-care systems that promote equity of access

- Expand universal health coverage, incorporating cancer care into essential benefits packages and national health insurance systems to reduce out-of-pocket expenditures for essential therapies for citizens with cancer
- Metrics: sub-Saharan African countries to incorporate cancer care into universal health coverage
- Timeframe: within 5 years

Action 4: increasing cure and improving care

- Pilot early cancer screening and detection programmes that make use of point-of-care technology delivered by allied health professionals, accompanied by mobilisation of resources to provide affordable, adequate, and value-based cancer treatment
- Metrics: substantial decrease in the number of patients with late presentation; decrease time between diagnosis and treatment; increase the percentage of patients with cancer receiving appropriate treatment as delineated in national guidelines
- Timeframe: within 5 years

Action 5: effective palliation

- Include palliative care as an integral and key part of cancer care as, in the medium term, the majority (70–80%) of African patients with cancer will present with advanced stage IV disease where often palliative care provides optimal management
- Metrics: established integrated programme of supportive care and rehabilitation with optimal and equal access to opioids for patients with cancer
- Timeframe: 1 - 3 years

Action 6: building and maintaining the workforce

- Establish relevant training programmes for health-care and allied professions; increase the number of individuals attending and gaining certification from various programmes; develop community-based awareness raising programmes; establish mechanisms for mitigating brain drain including through cooperation between governments, better conditions of employment, and incentives to retain talent
- Metrics: established oncology training programme in each country to build capacity for oncology needs; substantial increase in the number of health-care professionals committed to delivering cancer control programmes
- Timeframe: 3–5 years

Action 7: innovation and research

- Establish national cancer research institutes and committees with agreed funding streams; develop international collaborations and external partnerships
- Metrics: established centre of excellence or research network in
- each country
- Timeframe: 1–3 years

Action 8: invest in telehealth

- Expand the use of digital health solutions to address the growing cancer burden and disparities
- Metrics: increased investment in telehealth; increased governmental support with reliable infrastructure and policy, as well as regulations related to successful implementation and use of digital health solutions
- Timeframe: 1–3 years