

Cancer registries in resource-constrained countries can inform policy to reduce cancer burden

December 15 2016

Data from population-based cancer registries are vital for informing health programs, policies and strategies for cancer screening and treatment. A special issue of *Cancer Epidemiology*, prepared under the auspices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, offers lessons for planning and supporting cancer registration in resource-constrained settings to support data-driven policies on cancer prevention, early detection and appropriate treatment leading to significant cost savings for government and society as a whole.

The Guest Editors of the special issue, Dr. Florence Tangka and Dr. Mona Saraiya of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Sujha Subramanian and Dr. Patrick Edwards of RTI International (contractor), note that there are substantial differences in the existence, geographical coverage and quality of cancer registration across the world. Dr. Tangka commented: "There is almost 100% coverage in North America, but less than 10% in Central and South America, Asia and Africa. These countries are essentially fighting cancer blindfolded as they often can't know how to best direct their resources."

Dr. Subramanian added: "The articles in the special issue show that lack of continuous and sustained support for surveillance infrastructure can disrupt [data collection](#) and lead to the inefficient use of resources. Although cancer registries incur substantial set-up costs, once established the cost per case is low and countries then benefit from economies of

scale. This special issue of Cancer Epidemiology establishes baseline information to identify efficiencies in data collection, which is consistently reported as a high cost for registries. We hope that these findings will encourage other countries to establish registries."

The special issue reviews [cancer](#) registries in Kenya, Uganda, Colombia, India (Mumbai), and Barbados. and offers lessons for other [countries](#) with similar resource constraints.

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Provided by Elsevier

Citation: Cancer registries in resource-constrained countries can inform policy to reduce cancer burden (2016, December 15) retrieved 16 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-12-cancer-registries-resource-constrained-countries-policy.html>

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