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GLOBAL CONFERENCE REPORT

A brief report on the 2020 Canadian Global Oncology Workshop

by Reanne Booker

Cancer continues to be one of the leading causes of death worldwide, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting cancer as the first or second leading cause of death in 112 countries (WHO, 2020a). The American Cancer Society recently published statistics on global cancer, including an estimated incidence of 19.3 million new cancer cases and nearly 10 million deaths due to cancer in 2020 (Sung et al., 2021). Approximately 75% of cancer deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and yet, only 5% of global spending on cancer is directed to LMICs (Praeger et al., 2018). The burden of cancer globally is anticipated to increase, with projections showing that 28.4 million new cases of cancer will occur in 2040 (Sung et al., 2021). The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted screening, detection, and treatment of cancer, potentially increasing the morbidity and mortality associated with cancer for years to come (Cancino et al., 2020).

On November 25–26, 2020, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer hosted the inaugural Canadian Global Oncology Workshop (herein referred to as the Workshop). The Workshop was held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that while many individuals, groups, and institutions throughout Canada have done tremendous work in global oncology, such work has often been siloed and has not realized the full benefits of cohesion and collaboration (Ginsburg et al., 2012). The intent of the Workshop was to convene a group of leaders in global oncology and to engage such

leaders in discussion on global cancer control initiatives, past, current, and future, across research, education, advocacy, and policy. The Workshop provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences and expertise, as well as to give input into shaping priorities and potential future initiatives for Canadian involvement in global cancer control.

Workshop participants ($n = 111$) included experts from a variety of fields and disciplines including clinicians such as physicians, nurses, psychologists, and pharmacists, as well as leaders of Canadian cancer organizations, scientists, government representatives, policymakers, educators, and researchers. Workshop topics included:

- Canada's Role in Global Health
- Canadian Engagement in Global Cancer Control
- Understanding the Current Canadian Engagement in Global Cancer Control
- Developing a Globally Engaged Cancer Workforce
- Building Effective Partnerships in Global Cancer Control
- Strengthening Efforts in Global Cancer Control
- How will COVID-19 Impact Global Cancer Control Efforts.

Themes that were emphasized repeatedly during the Workshop included equity, bidirectional learning and bidirectional partnerships, coordination and collaboration both within Canada, as well as with partners in LMICs, sharing of expertise and resources, advocacy and funding support for global oncology initiatives. Additionally, participants recognized the importance of both multisectoral and multidisciplinary engagement in global oncology work.

For my presentation at the Workshop, I was tasked with discussing

the role of nursing in developing a globally engaged cancer workforce. Nurses comprise the largest occupational group in the healthcare sector worldwide and more than 80% of nurses work in the countries that contain half of the world's population (WHO, 2020b). Further, the global shortage of nurses disproportionately affects low- and middle-income countries, with Africa, South-East Asia, and Eastern Mediterranean regions being hardest hit (WHO, 2020b).

In the context of cancer control, nurses are integral to prevention, screening and early detection, and the provision of treatment, follow-up, survivorship, and palliative care (Al-Ruzzieh et al., 2015; Challinor et al., 2016). There is a need for both generalist nurses, as well as specialized and advanced practice nurses, with expertise in cancer care (Challinor et al., 2016). CANO/ACIO's Nursing Knowledge and Practice Framework provides an overview of the knowledge required by generalist nurses through to specialized nurses who care for people with cancer (CANO/ACIO, 2019).

Enhancing nursing education is imperative in order to expand the nursing workforce, as well as to improve the quality of cancer care (So et al., 2016). This is especially the case in LMICs where nurses have limited opportunities to learn about cancer and cancer nursing is not often recognized as a specialty practice. Strategies to enhance nursing education in LMICs include: in country, short-term intensive training, twinning programs, Regional Centre of Excellence development, School of Nursing collaboration, distance learning, and conference-based learning (So et al., 2016). CANO/ACIO members have already been involved in a number of these strategies (see article in this issue of CONJ by McQuestion et al.).

AUTHOR NOTES

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SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized just how important global health is to everyone, irrespective of where they live. As but one example, unmitigated transmission of SARS-CoV-2 anywhere in the world remains a threat to everyone in the world, particularly with respect to the emergence of new variants that may be more virulent, spread more easily, or develop immune

evasion capabilities. It is becoming increasingly apparent that we are all connected beyond the borders of our nations. Oncology nurses possess the knowledge and skills required to help reduce the burden of cancer worldwide. CANO/ACIO is committed to collaborating with cancer care leaders within Canada and internationally to help improve global cancer control.

The second Canadian Global Oncology Workshop will be held,

virtually, in early December 2021 and will be hosted by Queen's University Global Oncology Program. Please watch the CANO/ACIO website and your email for more information on the Workshop. To become involved in Canadian global oncology initiatives, including the CANO/ACIO International and Underserved Population Working Groups, please email Reanne Booker at reanne.booker@albertahealthservices.ca

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