

# THE CHALLENGE OF CANCER IN AFRICA

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**The African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC) is committed to creating awareness of the extent of cancer in Africa and to ensuring that programmes to prevent, diagnose, treat and palliate cancer in Africa are firmly on the continent's health agenda.**

There is a massive lack of resources to detect and treat cancer in Africa. The World Health Organization estimates that nearly half a million Africans died of cancer in 2010 and that compared to developed countries, the mortality to incidence ratio is in the order of 80% for most cancers. This figure is expected to rise significantly in the next 20 or so years, due to increased life expectancy, diet and western-influenced lifestyles. The vast majority of cancer patients present with late stage disease due to lack of awareness about cancer and limited access to health care. In addition, major knowledge gaps exist about the incidence of cancer in Africa due to lack of cancer registries to collect reliable cancer-related data. One fifth of all cancers worldwide are caused by a chronic infection, and up to one third of cancers in the developing world are curable if caught early. However, awareness is increasing as people become better informed about cancer due to social media and as prominent cancer survivors begin to tell their stories.

One of our key goals at AORTIC (African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer) is to urge governments to establish national cancer control plans in order to address resource issues, reversal of the brain drain of oncologists and researchers away from Africa and to facilitate the implementation of more training and treatment facilities.

## About AORTIC

AORTIC is a pan-African, bilingual (English and French), multi-disciplinary organisation dedicated to the promotion of cancer care and control in Africa. AORTIC was formed in 1983 by expatriate African cancer care workers, scientists and their friends, and is dedicated to the promotion of cancer control in Africa. The Executive Council of AORTIC consists of scientists and clinicians with a professional interest in prevention,

treatment and study of cancer – volunteering their expertise for the plight of the cancer patient on the continent.

## Mission

- ▶ To facilitate development of National Cancer Control Programmes.
- ▶ Support the development of standardised training programmes in all aspects of cancer care and management.
- ▶ Facilitate and promote research in cancer relevant to Africa.
- ▶ Provide relevant and accurate information on the prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and palliation of cancer to health care professionals, the media and the public.
- ▶ To create awareness of the prevalence of cancer in Africa.
- ▶ To reduce the stigma associated with cancer.
- ▶ To ensure that cancer is on the African Health Care Agenda.

## Vision

AORTIC's key objectives are to stimulate and promote research into cancer in Africa, to support and develop standardized training programmes in all aspects of cancer care and management and to enable African countries to develop National Cancer Control Programmes (NCCP). AORTIC is committed to creating awareness of the extent of cancer in Africa and to ensuring that programmes to prevent, diagnose, treat and palliate cancer in Africa are firmly on the continent's health agenda. The organisation will achieve this by working with other international agencies and non profit organisations, government agencies and businesses to act as advocate for improved resources and access to care. AORTIC will also

organize symposia, workshops, meetings and conferences that support its mission.

### **Objective**

To support, integrate and facilitate evidence-based interventions and innovative programmes towards the prevention and control of cancer in Africa.

### **Membership**

AORTIC members range from nurses, doctors, researchers and clinicians mostly from within Africa but also including North America and Europe. In addition to individuals joining AORTIC, opportunities exist for organizations with a similar mission to join AORTIC.

### **Partners**

AORTIC works collaboratively with its partners, National Cancer Institute (NCI), USA, Susan G Komen for the Cure, American Cancer Society (ACS), International Union for Cancer Control (UICC), LiveStrong, International Psycho-oncology Society (IPOS) and Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA). By forging links with other cancer organisations, AORTIC is able to share knowledge and expertise for the benefit of cancer patients across the continent.

### **AORTIC 2013 international cancer conference**

AORTIC hosts an international conference every two years and the next conference will take place in November 2013 in Durban, South Africa, from 21 – 24 November 2013. The conference aims to cover a wide range of topics with breadth and depth. These include a diverse range of issues related to cancer control in Africa such as national cancer control programmes, establishing advocacy and training for cancer registration across the continent and strengthening of health systems for health care delivery, in line with African Union policy. The conference will explore basic sciences, genetics, epigenetics and cancer biology. Early detection and treatment of site specific cancers, including biomarkers, novel therapies, radiation, chemotherapy and surgical oncology will be investigated in depth. Strong emphasis will also be placed on pathology, palliative care, epidemiology, diagnostic support services, HIV/AIDS- related cancers, oncology nursing, ethics and good clinical practice, among others.

For more information please visit our website: [www.aortic-africa.org](http://www.aortic-africa.org) or e-mail: [info@aortic-africa.org](mailto:info@aortic-africa.org).

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