

## Repetitive Cancer Awareness Training for Health Care Providers in the Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania

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**Introduction:** In Tanzania, cancer is a public health problem with a high mortality rate. Within the country is only three hospitals that provide cancer treatment. Among the reasons for the high mortality rate is late diagnosis caused by few and scattered prevention and awareness programs, early prevention, and difficulty accessing the health system. A low level of cancer awareness to health care workers contribute to poor prevention measures, screening, and treatment. The study aimed to assess the effect of training of cancer knowledge of health care workers working at the dispensary at Kilimanjaro region and its application into practice.

**Method:** A group of dispensary health care workers (n=16) attended cancer awareness training. Three training days were provided in this group, one day per month spread over a period of three months. A questionnaire was developed to assess cancer knowledge in pre and post-training panel surveys. Application of acquired knowledge into practice was assessed by follow-up and complemented by qualitative data.

**Results:** Cancer knowledge increased by 24% (95% CI=13-36%, p=0.002). Health care workers become more confident in educating their communities and coworkers about cancer, symptoms, risk factor treatment, and the importance of early detection. They reported becoming more confident in referring patients to the facilities for cancer screening. Furthermore, they were more confident to counsel the community about the impact of using traditional medicine for the treatment of cancer.

**Conclusion:** Repetitive cancer awareness training was effective in increasing cancer knowledge and application into practice. Furthermore, repeating training is important in medical networking. Dispensary health care workers are important in the health system in rural Tanzania. More repetitive cancer awareness training is needed in Tanzania and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

