Author's response to reviews

Title: Cancer Control in Developing Countries: Using Health Data and Health Services Research to Measure and Improve Access, Quality and Efficiency

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Title: Cancer Control in Developing Countries: Using Health Data and Health Services Research to Measure and Improve Access, Quality and Efficiency

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To the editorial team at BMC International Health and Human Rights and Dr. M.P. Curado:

Thank-you for your very helpful review of our manuscript.

We have considered your comments and have significantly changed the format of the paper as recommended. We think this will highlight the main message as outlined in the updated introduction: “The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of what is known about oncology health services in developing countries and to highlight data needs and current gaps in knowledge. Filling current gaps in knowledge would optimize cancer-related investment in health care systems and national cancer control strategies leading to improved access, quality and efficiency of cancer control in developing countries.”

We would respectfully suggest a new title as stated above. We think this is more in line with the stated purpose of this paper.

The updated manuscript is organized to reflect the reviewer’s recommendations as follows:

- **Background**: We have included a portion defining what is meant by structure, process and outcome and have defined cancer control according to World Health Organization documentation.

- **Description of cancer control programs in developing countries**: We have included examples from various developing countries in this section. Within these sections, we highlight some of the limitations in current data regarding the description of oncology services in developing countries. We organize this discussion according to these headings:
  
  - **Structure**: we have specifically included a detailed description of the situation in Tanzania.
  
  - **Access to care**: we describe barriers in access, especially structure-related barriers
  
  - **Process**
  
  - **Outcomes**

- **Information needs to improve cancer control in developing countries**: In this section, we provide a rationale for improving health data sources pertaining to oncology in developing countries. We start with a description of the sorts of needs for cancer services. We
emphasize how improved health data and health services research maximize investment of limited health resources for optimal results. A new summary table has been inserted. We describe some of the common sources of relevant health data and emphasize the central role of cancer registries. From a general discussion, we proceed to highlight specific research and information needs relevant to:

- **Structure**
- **Process**
- **Outcome** - We include a discussion of cost-effectiveness as a key outcome

We have removed the adjectives “formidable” and “silent and expanding crisis” and the subtitles “discussion”. We have made language corrections as requested.

Thank-you for your helpful input on this manuscript. If we can provide any further clarification, we would be pleased to do so.

Kind regards,

Dr. Timothy P Hanna

Dr. Alfrect CT Kangolle