Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

While cancer mortality in high-income nations continues to improve, many cancer patients in African countries consider survivorship to be out of reach. In the midst of this struggle, BVGH remains committed to changing the cancer narrative in Africa by improving health outcomes through its AAI programs and partnerships. Knowledge exchange initiatives, cancer research, and increased public awareness continue to be essential components of our strategy.

BVGH harnesses technology solutions to enhance the impact of its AAI programs. Our digital mentorship platform is enabling participants of AAI training programs to continue to practice and refine their skills. Building on the EST program, clinics in Bugesera District, Rwanda, are evaluating the use of Smartphone-Enhanced VIA (SEVIA) to enable more cost-effective detection of pre-cancerous cervical lesions. An African Consortium for Cancer Clinical Trials (ACCT) Mini-Grant awardee in Nigeria is utilizing mobile technology to understand factors influencing breast cancer patients’ late-stage presentation.

We welcomed two additional NGO partners (Rwanda Cancer Relief and Impact Hub Abidjan), with which BVGH will work to raise awareness of cancer in Rwanda and Côte d’Ivoire, respectively. These organizations play a key role supporting cancer patients locally and removing systemic obstacles to access and care.

Please share this newsletter with any of your colleagues who are interested in improving cancer patient outcomes globally or supporting AAI.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Dent, President & CEO
BIO Ventures for Global Health
Hôpital Général Idrissa POUYE

We are pleased to welcome our newest AAI hospital, Hôpital Général Idrissa POUYE (HOGIP). Located in the Grand Yoff commune of Dakar, Senegal, HOGIP houses 18 specialized departments with over 700 staff members including 18 oncologists. The hospital provides healthcare services to more than 100,000 patients annually. HOGIP is one of twelve Level 3 Public Health facilities in Senegal providing comprehensive cancer treatment.

Rwanda Cancer Relief

*Rwanda Cancer Relief* (RCR) is committed to ensuring that all people affected with cancer have access to a high standard of treatment and support regardless of their socio-economic background. Based in Kigali, Rwanda, RCR’s programs cover cancer education, patient support, and cancer research. Together, BVGH and RCR will work to strengthen cancer care capacity as well as raise awareness of the cancer burden in Rwanda.

Impact Hub Abidjan

Based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, *Impact Hub Abidjan* is a community that offers entrepreneurs support and a creative space in order to foster social innovation, develop entrepreneurship, and create impact through collaboration. Through their healthcare innovation ecosystem, *Innov’Keneya*, Impact Hub is creating solutions for the most pressing challenges surrounding the cancer patient journey. In collaboration with Innov’Keneya, BVGH will leverage the knowledge, expertise, and assets of the most influential stakeholders in the cancer ecosystem to tackle complex challenges across the healthcare delivery value chain and improve cancer patient outcomes in Côte d'Ivoire.
Cervical Cancer Refresher Training

Nine months following its cervical cancer Educate, Screen, and Treat program in Bugesera, Rwanda, BVGH and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) conducted an in-person refresher training course for the district’s healthcare providers. Over 40 nurses and midwives from 18 district health facilities attended the 4-day training, which covered cervical cancer screening techniques, triage of women with suspected cervical cancer, communication skills, and more. Responding to the healthcare workers’ concerns about the expertise needed to accurately diagnose cervical disease using visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA), BVGH and RBC engaged Queens University to introduce Smartphone-Enhanced VIA (SEVIA). Developed by Queens University and the Tanzanian Ministry of Health, SEVIA is being evaluated in Bugesera District through a pilot cluster randomized trial.

Digital Mentorship to Strengthen Africa’s Diagnostic Pathology

Recognizing that consistent educational engagement is crucial to maintaining a strong diagnostic pathology workforce, BVGH launched a digital mentorship platform for African pathologists. Via the platform, US-based pathology residents have been engaging 140+ laboratory personnel from 13 countries across Africa through weekly case posts that spark discussion and promote global knowledge exchange. BVGH’s platform – which is hosted on Workplace by Meta – enables participants to network, share educational resources, and provide their recommendations for solutions to on-the-ground challenges.

Interested in joining? Email Ashly Senske.
A Multidisciplinary Approach to Breast Cancer Treatment

Following the commissioning of the country’s first radiotherapy center in 2019, Rwanda’s Ministry of Health sought to integrate Rwanda’s cohort of diagnostic, surgical, medical, and radiation oncology experts into a single cohesive team. In response, BVGH, the Rwandan Biomedical Center, Rwanda Cancer Relief, and the American Society of Clinical Oncology organized a workshop on the multidisciplinary management of breast cancer. Over the course of three days, experts from Rwanda and the USA guided the 19 workshop attendees through presentations of a multidisciplinary patient management. Rwandan patient case studies were used to demonstrate multidisciplinary team dynamics. Throughout the interactive lectures and case study discussions, participants were encouraged to enhance their communication with other cancer subspecialties.

![Breast cancer patient case study session.](image)

Improving Diagnoses of Chronic Myeloid Leukemia

- Dr. Sidra Zaheer, ASCP Fellow, resident, Westchester Medical Center, USA
- Dr. Anazoe Madu, Head of the Department of Hematology and Immunology, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Nigeria
Patients with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) require regular testing to monitor their disease, yet these tests are often cost prohibitive for many CML patients in Nigeria. To address the cost barrier for his patients, Dr. Anazoeze Madu engaged BVGH to expand the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital’s (UNTH) diagnostic services. BVGH tapped its AAI partner, American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) and engaged ASCP Fellow, Dr. Sidra Zaheer to support UNTH. With the goal of establishing PCR testing for CML patients, Dr. Madu and his team collaborated with Dr. Zaheer to develop regionally appropriate CML PCR protocols and processes to track and monitor CML patient disease progression at UNTH.

Addressing the cancer data gap in Africa through clinical trials

AC3T Mini-Grant Awardees

In partnership with Takeda, BVGH awarded African Consortium for Cancer Clinical Trials (AC3T) Study Pool Mini-Grants to eight early-career African researchers. These grants built on BVGH’s 14-week digital clinical trial training program and are supporting research into various avenues of improving the quality of cancer patient care in Africa. Let’s meet two of our awardees:

Dr. Adewumi Alabi, Clinical and Radiation Oncologist, NSIA-LUTH Cancer Center (NLCC), Nigeria

Dr. Alabi is a Clinical and Radiation Oncologist at the NSIA-LUTH Cancer Center (NLCC), Nigeria who specializes in the treatment of adult solid tumors, including prostate, breast, and gynecological cancers. She has a passion for clinical research with a focus on cancer treatment, quality of life, and issues related to cancer survivorship. Her AC3T Mini-Grant study aims to use mobile technology to determine the effect of total delay (patient, diagnosis, and treatment delay) on breast cancer patients’ stage of presentation at NLCC.

Dr. Adu Appiah-Kubi, Gynecology Oncologist, University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ghana

Dr. Appiah-Kubi is a gynecology oncologist at the University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ghana. With his AC3T Mini-Grant, he is exploring the most frequently reported adverse effects experienced by gynecologic cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy treatment at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital.
The Lancet Oncology Commission

The Lancet Oncology Commission was created to address the state of cancer in sub-Saharan Africa. BVGH and other key local and international stakeholders examined the current situation and put forth actionable solutions. Read the report here.

IHC Digital Training Featured in Nature

Together with partners from City of Hope National Medical Center and Hawassa University College of Medicine and Health Science, BVGH published a blog describing their digital immunohistochemistry training program for histotechnicians. Click here to read the blog, which was published on the “Africa and Cancer” Channel of the “Nature Portfolio Cancer Community Blog.”

Digital Training Leads to Publication on Rare Breast Cancer in Rwandan Women

Faculty from Butaro Cancer Center of Excellence (BCCOE) and the American University of the Caribbean (AUC) co-published a case report on a rare form of breast cancer detected in Rwanda. The publication is the latest result of BVGH’s eight-week digital pathology training program led by AUC experts.

AAI IHC Collaborations Featured at CUGH

Dr. Elisée Hategekimana (University Teaching Hospital of Butaré [CHUB], Rwanda) and Dr. Kelsey Hummel (Baylor College of Medicine, USA) presented the results of their AAI collaboration at the CUGH 2022 conference. Poster presentations describe the creation of a mobile cytology clinic to improve access to cancer diagnostic services in rural Rwanda and the introduction of manual immunohistochemistry services to improve diagnostic capacity at CHUB.

Announcements

Cormode Cancer Foundation AIT Schedule

Cormode Cancer Foundation partners with African Independent Television (AIT) for a twice-monthly program that offers support for cancer patients and general cancer education. The program airs every second and fourth Wednesday at 8:15am WAT. Watch for upcoming programs and view their library of shows here.

Upcoming AAI Digital Trainings

Stay tuned for more information about BVGH’s upcoming AAI digital training programs:

- HIV-Associated Malignancies
- Basic and Advanced Cancer Treatment - French
- Basic and Advanced Cancer Treatment - English
Access to Oncology Medicines (ATOM) Coalition Launched May 22nd

BVGH applauds the Union for International Cancer Control for bringing access implementers together and forming the ATOM Coalition. We are proud to be a partner and look forward to synergizing our oncology access and training programs, sharing best practices, and accelerating equitable access to high-quality cancer care. Learn more here.

Call for Abstracts: Partnership of Emory and Africa for Cancer and Education (PEACE)

The PEACE program – an educational partnership between pathologists from Emory University, Yale University, and African countries – is now accepting abstracts for its December symposium. Abstracts are due on July 31st, 2022. Learn more here.

Join the Fight

To learn more about AAI and to get involved, please contact Katy Graef.

Thank you to our AAI Partners
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