

DIGITAL DISSEMINATION OF CANCER TREATMENT PROTOCOLS; INNOVATIONS AROUND COVID 19

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Background : Cancer burden has been on the rise in recent years especially in LMIC settings. Cancer control activities in Kenya have been escalated in recent years to handle the high mortality and morbidity caused by cancer. The National Cancer Treatment Protocols were developed in 2019 with the aim to standardize cancer treatment across the country and increase the index of suspicion for cancer among primary health care workers. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major disruption to in-person training of PHCs. Therefore, the National Cancer Control Program of the Kenya Ministry of Health (MoH) developed two digital training platforms for PHC on cancer early detection:

1. Early Cancer Detection on Ministry of Health virtual academy- Web based
2. Android-based mobile application: M-Saratani

Methodology: The process started with identification of the priority cancer types in Kenya, as documented in the National Cancer Treatment Protocols 2019. Multidisciplinary subject-matter expert teams were assembled to develop content for each of the priority cancer topics; including clinical specialists, academicians, representatives of HCW regulatory bodies. Each team developed the primary content including videos, diagrams, case studies and questions. A pilot was conducted in Bungoma and Taita Taveta counties.

Results: Since the launch in November 2021, over 2000 healthcare workers have enrolled into these platforms. The average completion rate for the two platforms stands at 5% for m-saratani and 81% for MOH Virtual Academy.

Recommendations: digital training platforms are timely and essential especially during disruptions due to public health emergencies, or where resources to support in-person training are lacking. LMICs can utilize such initiatives to increase capacity of PHCs to diagnose cancer early and link to further management. Lack of internet bundles and time constraints for those in managerial positions were some challenges highlighted. This led to slow progress on the courses. The MOH virtual academy has been in existence for a while thus better uptake of the course.