

## **Lung Cancer Presentations Amongst Patients Attending Care at a National Referral Hospital Oncology Clinic in Western Kenya.**

Lawrence Atundo, AMPATH-MTRH; Moi School of Health Sciences.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Misdiagnosis of lung cancer remains a major challenge in Kenya due to low index of suspicion for clients presenting at health facilities. Besides technicalities related to screening and diagnostic procedures, similarities in clinical manifestations with pulmonary tuberculosis have largely contributed to most patients being mismanaged. The aim of this study was to establish the clinical presentations of lung cancer in patients presenting at a national referral hospital in Western Kenya prior to diagnosis of lung cancer.

### **METHODS:**

A retrospective review of clinical history of all primary lung cancer cases diagnosed at the AMPATH lung cancer clinic was done. Documentation of presenting complaints during the clinical evaluation prior to the diagnosis was made and analysed. Percentage occurrence for every presenting symptom was tabulated to give a reflection of common symptoms. The study was done within the first 15 months of program implementation as a key initiative to inform clinical evaluation.

### **RESULTS:**

During the period between Jan 2018 and March 2019, a total of 64 patients diagnosed with Lung cancer. The findings of the presenting symptoms and their percentage occurrence were as follows: chest pains at 87.5%, cough at 73.4%, difficulty in Breathing at 53.1%, weight loss at 40.6%, haemoptysis at 37.5%, shortness of breath at 31.3%, other Symptom's at 31.3%, fatigue at 18.8% and back pains at 14.1%. Patients presented with more than one symptom and on evaluation, chest pain was the most common symptom accounting for 87.5% while back pain was the least common accounting for 14.1%. Others symptoms included hoarseness of voice, general body malaise, abdominal pain, hemiplegia, nausea & vomiting and neurological symptoms that together accounted for 31.3%.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Chest pains, cough and difficulty in breathing are the most outstanding symptoms patients present with prior to diagnosis of lung cancer. For a high index of suspicion, healthcare providers should identify clients with such and consider further investigations. Emphasis should be given to identify them during awareness creation for community workers to prompt referral for early diagnosis. Most patients are diagnosed with symptoms of advanced disease.