An impact evaluation of the conquer cancer foundation’s international education award benefitting early-career oncologists

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Program/Project Purpose: The International Development and Education Award (IDEA) is an annual mentorship program supported by the Conquer Cancer Foundation for early-career oncologists in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). These award recipients are matched with leading members of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) who serve as scientific mentors to each recipient, receive the opportunity to attend ASCO’s Annual Meeting in Chicago, and visit their mentor’s cancer center in either the United States or Canada. Recipients of this international award also receive three years of complimentary ASCO membership, including a subscription to the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

Structure/Method/Design: Over the past eleven years, the IDEA program has produced 231 alumni from over 40 LMICs. Applicants are selected based on criteria such as their personal statement, research interests, and stated future plans to implement what they learn through the IDEA program. After receiving the IDEA award, recipients complete a program evaluation one month after participating, one year after participating, and five years after participating. These surveys are designed to collect information about the following programmatic outcomes: 1) Promote professional development of young oncologists in LMICs 2) Disseminate knowledge learned at Annual Meeting with colleagues 3) Create lasting mentee/mentor relationships 4) Inform ASCO and its members about cancer care in developing countries 5) Extend awareness of ASCO, its mission and services to developing countries. This program is sustained by the strength of the IDEA alumni community, as many new applicants are referred by previous award recipients.

Outcomes & Evaluation: The IDEA alumni surveys have been conducted since 2009. The majority of one-month survey respondents report meeting program outcomes; however, less than half of respondents report meeting the same outcomes five years later. For example, 100% of 2014 recipients reported making a plan for continued communication with their mentor. But only 53% of 2009 alumni reported remaining in contact with their mentor five years later.

Going Forward: One of the greatest challenges for the IDEA program is the limited long-term impact of a weeklong visit with program mentors. The majority of award recipients commented in the one-month evaluations they would appreciate more time at their mentor’s cancer.

Funding: The 2014 IDEA award recipients were supported by the following sponsors: Amgen, Avon Foundation for Women, Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Millennium, The Takeda Oncology Company, National Cancer Institute, Open Society Foundations, Roche.

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Inter-sectoral partnerships to ensure comprehensive tobacco-control legislation in Suriname

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Program/Project Purpose: As a middle-income Caribbean country, Suriname faces the worldwide trend of increasing mortality and morbidity due to chronic, non-communicable diseases related largely to a formidable tobacco presence. Local tobacco use and air quality was tested in 2011 in 30 hospitality establishments in the capital of Paramaribo. Results revealed that smoking was observed in over half the establishments examined and air quality exceeded the World Health Organization’s (WHO) standards by 26 times. Suriname committed to ratifying and implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2008 and aimed to implement national, comprehensive tobacco-control legislation based on the FCTC.

Structure/Method/Design: The goals of passing comprehensive, smoke-free legislation were to prevent the detrimental effects of second-hand smoke on vulnerable populations, to avert smoking initiation, and to promote smoking cessation. An inter-sectoral Tobacco Commission developed the Framework Convention. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) were responsible for leading the policy initiative and drafting the bill. The MOH then mobilized all of society to support passage of the legislation. The bill included the establishment of a Tobacco Bureau that promotes research and tobacco cessation programs.

Outcomes & Evaluation: Health authorities played a key role in advocating for the submitted bill when tobacco and hospitality lobbyists attempted to weaken tobacco-control through pointed bill amendments. The original, comprehensive smoke-free bill passed unanimously in the National Assembly and was signed into law by President Bouterse on March 6, 2013. Legislation went into effect on June 7, 2013. On June 7, 2014 all cigarette packages sold nationally were required to carry graphic warning labels. The law, which includes a ban on the import and sale of electronic cigarettes, was hailed by PAHO as the most comprehensive tobacco-control legislation in the Caribbean region. In addition, PAHO/WHO recognized the all-of-society approach by awarding the Tobacco Prize on World No Tobacco Day to the National Assembly and the MOH. Baseline evaluation data collected in 2013 shows that 33.8% of males and 6.6% of females, age 15-65, reported they currently smoked. Anecdotal evidence suggests a growing desire for stricter public smoking regulations and personal positive adjustments to current smoking habits.

Going Forward: Oversight of legislation implementation and enforcement continues to be a challenge. Future goals include legislation amendments to increase tobacco taxes and to restrict smoking in open, public spaces.

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Promoting oral and general health behaviors in rural Kenyan schoolchildren – challenges in private versus public school settings

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Program/Project Purpose: Oral health is an important component of general health. Although oral health can be regarded as a fundamental human right, inequalities in oral health continue to exist globally. Wealthy countries have witnessed a marked reduction in the experience of dental caries in children and young adults during the 1970’s and 2000’s. However, in the developing nations, including Kenya, oral disease is a significant health concern. Low levels of public awareness, in combination with a lack of resources including providers of oral health care services, are major contributors to the problem. This presentation will describe a health promotion program designed to improve oral and general health behaviors in school-aged children in Kenya.

Structure/Method/Design: This program has 5 different educational components: (1) health education, (2) oral disease prevention techniques, (3) advocacy training, (4) preventive dental care, and (5)