

Aslan Joins with the UNC Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Public Health to Institute Cancer Registry and Quality Improvement Initiatives

Aslan's partnerships with world-class institutions form the foundation of our capacity building model. We are honored to have begun a cutting-edge collaboration with the UNC Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Public Health to conduct two integrated and multi-year initiatives that we hope will contribute significantly to the progress of Ethiopia's pediatric cancer health system.

The first targets data collection and management processes on the pediatric oncology units at TASH, Jimma University Medical Center, Ayder Comprehensive Specialized Hospital (Mekelle), and St. Paul's Millennium Hospital (Addis Ababa). Currently in its early stages, data collection is conducted primarily using Excel spreadsheets, and there are no formal hospital-based registries.

To address this need, Dr. Benyam Muluneh, PharmD, and his team from the UNC School of Pharmacy are taking the lead with Aslan's Medical Advisory Board to pilot at TASH a project that identifies existing gaps in data collection practices and implements practical interventions that will ultimately allow implementation of a hospital-based pediatric cancer registry.

As these piloted interventions are then replicated at the other units, the resulting data can be aggregated into a national pediatric cancer registry. In the long term, this effort will enable the pediatric oncology units and the FMOH to gain a broader picture of the nationwide pediatric cancer burden and to assess where best to allocate resources to enhance patient care and outcomes.



Aslan Medical Board member, Dr. David Korones, and University of Rochester medical student, Scott Levy, who assisted with the cancer registry project as his summer internship.

The second related initiative complements the curriculum of our TASH fellowship program, which now incorporates a quality improvement (QI) module and accompanying research/project requirements for each fellow. We are extremely fortunate that, under the leadership of Aslan Medical Board member, Dr. Thomas Alexander, the UNC Schools of Medicine and Public Health are lending their expertise to collaborate on an implementation and quality improvement project over the next three years.

Based upon collaborative work to strengthen complete and accurate data collection, this effort has two aims: to build a rigorous QI capacity through education, mentorship, and practical project development and implementation; and to support dissemination of findings through collaborative writing and publication. A talented pediatrician and public health specialist beginning her pediatric hematology-oncology fellowship at UNC, Dr. Catherine Habashy, will be dedicating her fellowship program to this initiative. Like other aspects of our work, the outcomes of the QI project will be shared with the other pediatric cancer programs to instruct similar inquiries there.

We thank Drs. Alexander, Muluneh, and Habashy and their colleagues for their dedication and partnership, and look forward to working together to improve standards of pediatric cancer care throughout Ethiopia.