

Technological solutions for global hematology and oncology

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Abstract

Noncommunicable diseases, such as cancer, anemia, and heart disease, are expected to eclipse infectious diseases as the major cause of mortality in the 21st century. Previously considered a scourge of only industrialized and high-income countries, we now know that the majority of noncommunicable disease-related deaths will occur in low- and middle-income countries, where over 6 billion of the world's 7.4 billion inhabitants live. Unfortunately, access to high quality screening, prevention, diagnosis, and symptom management remains a "luxury" item, out of reach for the majority of the world's population. In addition to the moral and ethical imperative to address this global health inequity, there is a strong economic argument for the provision of hematology and oncology care, even in resource-constrained settings. This article will provide a perspective on current challenges in global hematology and oncology, including issues relating to training and retaining expert staff, the need for scalable and sustainable diagnostic approaches, treatment access, and health care infrastructure. Several examples of cost-effective and creative strategies led by groups from academia, nonprofits, governments, and industry will be discussed; these often technology-forward approaches focus on improving awareness, engagement, and action in global hematology and oncology.

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