Kenyan Hospitals Introducing Palliative Care

The Kenya Hospice and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA) in partnership with The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and the True Colours Trust is supporting the integration of palliative care into public health services in Kenya.

The partnership is through the Waterloo Coalition – a collaboration of donors and palliative care organisations working in Kenya and Malawi.

KEHPCA projects that the partnership will enable an additional 4,000 new adult cancer patients and 8,000 adult HIV/AIDS patients to receive high quality palliative care through the new hospital units in a period of one year.

It is also projected that an additional 500 new paediatric cancer patients and 1,000 paediatric HIV/AIDS patients will receive palliative care through the new hospital units each year.

Dr. Zipporah Ali, National Coordinator, KEHPCA, explains that ‘Effective palliative care results in patients spending more time at home and reduces the number of hospital inpatient days. It improves symptom management; provides patient...’

Can Nanotechnology Benefit Africa’s Development?

By Prof. Wiebe E. Bijker

Governments and industries around the world are investing large sums of money into what has been termed the greatest technological breakthrough since ICT and biotechnology. But can nanotechnology benefit Africa’s development too?

On December 12 and 13, 2011, some twenty Kenyan nanotechnology researchers and policy makers gathered in Nairobi to discuss this question. The workshop was titled “Nanotechnologies for Kenya’s development: questions of knowledge brokerage and risk governance.” It was jointly organized by the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) and Maastricht University, the Netherlands.

Nanoscience and nanotechnology is the understanding and control of matter at the nano-scale. This is incredibly small. The width of a human hair is between 60,000 and 80,000 nanometers, and a human fingernail grows some 10 nanometers per minute. Nanotechnologists are working with materials between 1 and 100 nanometers.

Nanotechnologies promise enormous benefits for development in the fields of water, energy, health, food, and information.
Kenyan Hospitals Introducing Palliative Care

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family and care giver satisfaction; reduces the overall cost of disease and improves quality of life of patients and family.

This partnership will demonstrate and document the benefits and will highlight how palliative care can be used to strengthen the government health care system, she added.

Lucy Sibomby, Chair, True Colours Trust, said the Kenya government's commitment to integrate palliative care into eleven public level 4 and provincial hospitals is commendable. "We are delighted to dedicate this partnership, which will help ensure that people with life-limiting illnesses across Kenya are able to access pain relief and symptom control," she said.

The Government of Kenya's commitment to establish palliative care services in these hospitals will guarantee a more effective, efficient, and equitable health system. A health system that includes palliative care services is vital to ensure the delivery of quality pain and symptom control and an improvement in the general care, support and quality of life for all suffering from life-threatening illnesses in Kenya.

This significant public-private partnership was part of the development and implementation of a national training programme for the integration of palliative care into hospital services, the development and dissemination of comprehensive palliative care guidelines, provision of technical assistance, and strengthening of the capacity of personnel involved in palliative care services in Kenya. The programme is expected to improve the quality of palliative care in the country and to provide a more effective, efficient, and equitable health system.

Nigeria Records Africa's Third Stem Cell Transplantation

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health minister, reacting to the development said: "It means that the sickle cell disease patients in Nigeria now have an additional treatment available to them locally and which could even prove to be superior to more taking of drugs."

Chairman of the Department of Medicine of the University of Benin would serve as a stimulus for other tertiary hospitals in the country. "It will set a catalytic to make other centres to want to prove themselves as centres of excellence.

It is the third and the technology mastered by University of Benin teaching Hospital would be deployed to tackle other diseases.

"What it now means is that, Nigerians will no longer have to travel outside this country, unless out of choice, for stem cell transplant and for the treatment of such diseases like sickle cell disease, leukaemia, cancers, and other diseases that lend themselves to this treatment," he added.

Michael Dadama, the chairman of the Department of Medicine of the Teaching Hospital, said the cell transplant began three years ago, when the institution assembled a team of experts who trained in London, after which it sent to Switzerland in an effort to bring comfort to Nigerians suffering from sickle cell anaemia and other diseases.

"It did not start now but three years ago when we sent 18 experts to Switzerland in batches and in the course of doing that, experts from Switzerland came here to put up this initiative," he said.

He said: "Stem cell means primitive cell; the transplantation means you are taking from one person and transplanting to the other. You need to get the stem cell. You have to go to the bone marrow, but then it is not every cell that is primitive. The process requires extensive technical knowledge and it's a delicate procedure."

"To do this, you have to break down the defences of the defence of the person. You need to get this (primitive cell) from somebody to transfer to others."

Nigeria has a high incidence of sickle cell sufferers (over 4 million as of 2005) and had hitherto relied on a management drug called hydroxyurea, at the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development from a local herb.