

***BACKGROUND:***

International Health and Development Network [IHDN], a non-profit organization based in the United States, recruits volunteers for medical mission trips to Ghana. Project activities of volunteers are dictated by their background, skills, and experiences. This year [2001] Professor Remi Imeokparia, associate professor and head/public health department, received some funding from Rotary Foundation to travel to Ghana. Fieldwork assignments at the University of Ghana School of Public Health precluded her from fulfilling her prior commitment to collaborate with the school. Dr. Agamah, therefore, resuscitated his long-term interest at initiating a cancer registry at Korle Bu. This interest met the challenge posed to him [Dr. Agamah] by Professor Tagoe to contribute his skills to Korle Bu and Ghana. Drs Agamah and Imeokparia designed and planned a cancer registry workshop, as well as other related computer activities. Because of Professor Akosa's time constraints, Dr. Wiredu assumed responsibility for local arrangements of the workshop and training.

***OBJECTIVES:***

The goals of the workshop were to:

1. increase awareness among health professionals at Korle Bu about importance of a cancer registry
2. discuss topics relevant to establishing a cancer registry
3. provide/enhance hands-on computer statistical skills
4. facilitate organization of a multidisciplinary team of cancer specialists to initiate the process of a population-based cancer registry

***PREPARATION FOR WORKSHOP:***

Preparation for the workshop started about March 2001 when some faculty at Korle Bu showed interest in the project. US-based faculty started the preparation - topics, computer needs such as hardware & software, participants, location and duration. Communication between colleagues in Ghana and the United States was fragmented to the extent that by the time the US-based faculty arrived in Ghana July 2001, the final details of the workshop and training were not available. This, probably, contributed to the low attendance and the shortening of the program.

***CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOP:***

A three-day workshop was planned. However, on the first day, participants requested an abbreviated program because of prior commitments as well as the short notice given to them. A two-day workshop was conducted at the Clinical Lecture Theater from about 10:30 a.m. until about 4 p.m.

***OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES:***

Three [3] sessions of computer statistical classes on using SPSS and Epi Info 2000 were held at the University of Ghana Medical School on July 18 to 19, August 3 to 4, and August 6 to 7, 2001, respectively. Using Epi-Info 2000, hands-on skills about designing questionnaire for data entry, performing data entry using an example provided in-class, exporting entered data to other software formats, such as dBase IV, were provided. Data entered in Epi-Info were then

downloaded to SPSS. With SPSS, participants learned hands-on basics of data entry, performing selected statistical analyses and interpretation of statistical output. They learned how to interact with, and interpret the previously downloaded data from Epi-Info 2000.

### ***PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES:***

Collated comments of participants showed that all were very appreciative of the initiative to conduct such an important topic in cancer management and control. They agreed that the performance and knowledge of material of faculty were excellent. Information gained was educational and stimulating. They were surprised that despite the short notice, attendance was very good and the organization was superb. They requested that such an important workshop should be available annually. They, however, felt that more health professionals would attend if given adequate notice. Some would prefer if the program were held in the evenings, after working hours. Others would like short sessions of 2-3 hours during the morning/evening period given over a few days, instead of the recently concluded two-day sessions, both of which started in the morning. Other topics, such as health policy, were also requested as well as handouts and better lunch than the type provided.

### ***CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:***

The turnout for the workshop was better than expected. This is encouraging. In order to maintain this momentum, a similar program will be planned for next year. We will, therefore, recommend the following:

- *maintain continuous communication between the US-based faculty and their Ghanaian counterparts*
- *organize a cancer committee and cancer study group at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital*
- *write clear goals and objectives to establish a registry at Korle Bu, which will serve as the basis for establishing a population-based registry*
- *determine a timeline of all the stages essential to setting up the cancer registry*
- *apply for a funded grant*

### ***\*SUMMARY:***

The main aim of the workshop was to bring together a multidisciplinary team of cancer specialists and increase the awareness in establishing a cancer registry at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. The growing interest in the establishment of a population-based cancer registry in the country was evident during the discussion sessions. Majority of participants recognized the importance of a cancer registry in the community. They believe that an operational cancer registry at Korle Bu will assist other major hospitals in Ghana to establish their registries, which will be linked to help obtain population data. They were appreciative of the efforts of the US-based faculty, and suggested that this workshop be held annually.

### ***WRITTEN by:***

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[\*Note: Summary details and Recommendations are in an accompanying .pdf document]