World Child Cancer
No child should suffer

PROJECT FACTSHEET:
Ghana

Project Center: Korle Bu Teaching Hospital (KBTH), Accra

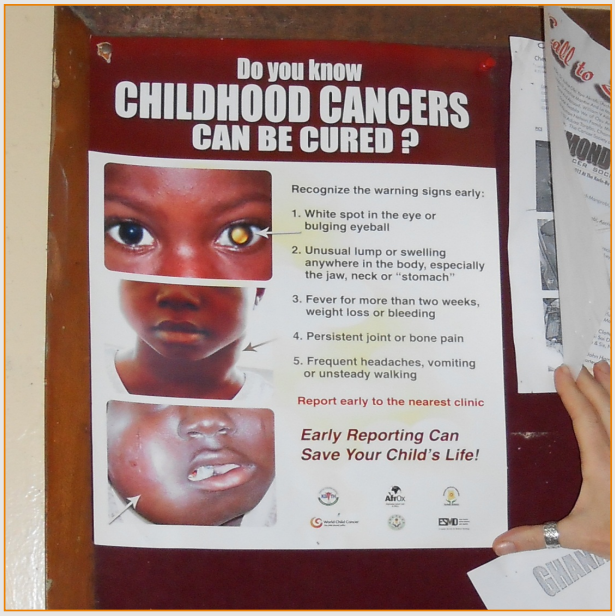
Twinning Center: Royal Sick Children's Hospital (RSCH), Edinburgh, UK

Other Charity Partners: AfrOx, UK

Project Leader: Dr Lorna Awo Renner

Project Mentors: Professor Tim Eden, UK
Dr Emma Johnson & Dr Angela Edgar, RSCH

Start & End Date: October 2010 - September 2015



Awareness campaign posters

Background:

Lymphomas form around 40% pf the childhood cancers seen at KBTH, which is the largest teaching hospital in Ghana and has around 250 new child cancer patients every year. Burkitt lymphoma is the most common tumor forming around 70% of the lymphoma cases diagnosed at the hospital. Other childhood cancers are Wilms tumor, retinoblastoma and leukemia. The other hospital which treats childhood cancers is Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) in Kumasi.

New day care unit opened 2013

Key Problems:

- There are only 2 trained pediatric oncology doctors and no specialist nurses
- Survival rates are less than 20% for diagnosed children
- Under-diagnosis is a major problem with estimated 800 children going undiagnosed
- 20% of children are diagnosed too late for curative treatment
- Around 50% of patients fail to complete the full course of treatment
- There is no national childhood cancer registry to assess the problem accurately
- Parents are often unable to afford chemotherapy or pain relief drugs

Project Objectives:

1) Create a center of excellence at KBTH and a robust twinning partnership
2) Establish satellite centers for diagnosis and treatment across Ghana
3) Improve awareness of childhood cancer and its potential curability
4) Improve diagnosis and access to treatment
5) Increase survival rates from less than 20% to over 50% over the 5 year project
6) Develop long-term sustainability for care in the unit
7) Develop a national model of cancer care for children

Key Project Outputs:

- Implement a training program for healthcare professionals
- Establish 4 satellite centers with trained staff to aid diagnosis and referral
- Start a national childhood cancer database to assess the extent of the problem
- Subsidise staff salaries including 2 data managers and social workers
- Provide funding for chemotherapy and palliative care drugs
- Develop an awareness program for the public and primary healthcare workers
- Develop locally appropriate treatment protocols

Impact:

- Bi-annual training workshops at KBTH by the twinning partner
- Regular online tutorials and case discussions
- POND database active with 2 part-time data managers
- Parent support group and other local fundraising is active
- Newly opened day care unit
- Awareness campaign with posters distributed across the country
- Reduction in abandonment of treatment
- National Cancer Plan created and awaiting approval form Ministry of Health
- Diagnosis rate increased to nearly 40% out of the no. of expected cases

Young patient at KBTH

Helen Bennet and Dr Hannah Parks