

# Cancer Awareness Among Adults in 3 Districts of Kilimanjaro Region, Northern Tanzania

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## BACKGROUND

Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC), is a referral hospital for over 15 million people in Northern Tanzania. It has been receiving patients with various malignancies and referring majority of them to Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) in Dar-Es-Salaam for management and care. In recent years diagnosed cancer cases have been increasing rapidly in Sub-Saharan Africa [1], leading to large numbers of patients presenting with an advanced stage [2] or getting lost before treatment as traveling to ORCI becomes a financial burden. Realizing the need for cancer care, KCMC has recently established its own Cancer Care Centre (CCC). In December 2016, CCC collaborated with Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College via Institute of Public Health to conduct a study determining cancer awareness in the rural areas of Kilimanjaro Region.

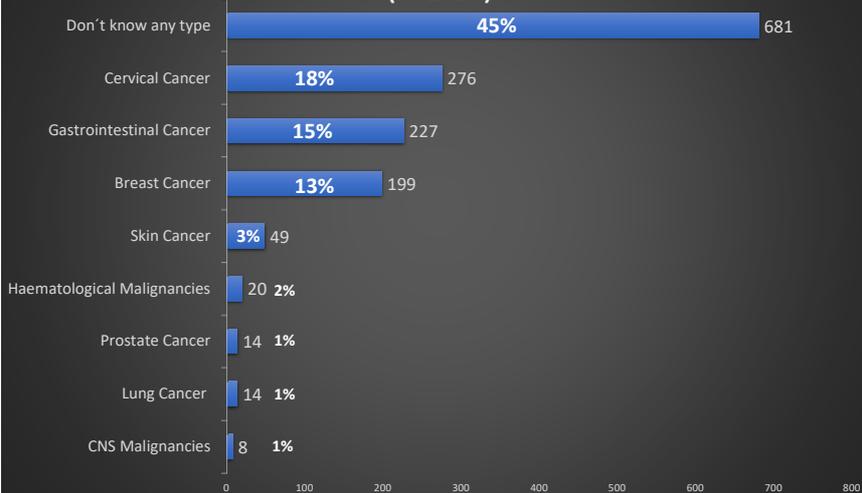
## METHODS

A household survey, conducted by medical students in 35 villages in 3 rural districts. Households were randomly selected and one adult member from a household was interviewed by using questionnaires to collect information on cancer awareness. Data were analyzed using SPSS.

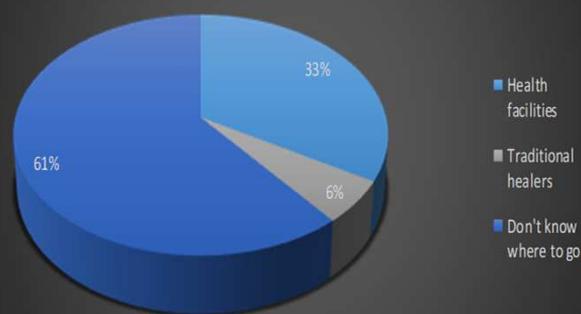
## RESULTS

A total of 1517 people were interviewed. 72.8% were females and 71.8% aged between 15-54 years. 90.9% of participants had primary education or higher. 85% of participants reported to have ever heard of cancer, 11.2% reported to ever had a household member who had suffered from cancer and 4.3% reported to have someone in a household currently suffering from cancer. Forty four percent (54%) of participants were able to mention at least one type of cancer.

People's response regarding type of Cancer they know (n=1517)



Where Do People Mostly Seek Care For Cancer? (n=1188)



## CONCLUSION

There is a high level of awareness of cancer among the respondents with 85%, corresponding with a survey in Dar-Es-Salaam about breast cancer awareness among women [3], which showed an awareness level of 98% in an urban setting. However, this survey displays only 32% recognize cancer as a major health problem for their community and six out of ten people interviewed were not able to mention any type of cancer. People had more insight on various gynecological malignancies as compared to other malignancies such as those commonly affecting children or hematology malignancies. These results show areas to put more efforts in educating people as this is an important step to assure patients arrive at the CCC in an early stage of their disease.

## Literature

- 1 Stefan DC. Cancer Care in Africa: An Overview of Resources. JGO 2015; 1:30-36
- 2 Ngoma T, Mandeli J, Holland JF. Downstaging Cancer in rural Africa. Int J Cancer 2015;136(12):2875-9.
- 3 Morse EP, Maegga B, Joseph G, Miesfeldt S. Breast Cancer Knowledge, Beliefs and Screening Practices among Women seeking Care at District Hospitals in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Breast Cancer (Auckl) 2014; 8:73-79.