Proposed Special Issue: Progress of cancer research in developing countries
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As developing economies around the world become more socially affluent in the coming decades, the incidence of cancer-related mortality is expected to rise significantly owing to a combination of lifestyle changes and multiple environmental factors (Figure 1). Based on statistics from the World Health Organization, developing countries accounted for nearly 72% of cancer mortality in 2008 even though the average disease incidence in these countries is lower compared to that of high-income nations.

It has been projected that up to 60% (ca. 15–20 million) of new cancer cases will occur in developing countries by the year 2020, causing more deaths than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. In the past, cancer management in developing countries has focused heavily on disease prevention, general awareness improvement, and early detection, while deprioritizing treatment and research efforts as a result of limited resources. However, given the severity of the situation, it is now necessary to recalibrate our focus and reprioritize the investment of valuable resources in the fight against cancer.

With respect to cancer research in developing countries, a major challenge faced by international researchers is the lack of reliable data, along with a limited research output from the developing world, which hampers our general understanding of the capability of these countries in dealing with the cancer pandemic. From 2011 to 2015, the average combined research output from developing countries constituted only 20% of the total publication output of the world’s top 100 most published countries in the field of oncology (Figure 2). Nonetheless, developing countries have recorded an impressive 20% average year-on-year increase in terms of their publication output during this period, and five of these countries contributed to more than three quarters of the total number of papers published (Figure 3).

In contrast, developed nations only registered a 4% growth in the same period, with two consecutive years of decline between 2012 and 2014. This steady upward trend of publication output from developing countries shows that researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the values of evidence-based research, without which would limit funding opportunities and restrict international collaborations, as well as partnerships.

Advances in Modern Oncology Research is an Open Access journal aimed at increasing the accessibility of peer-reviewed information among researchers worldwide. The journal emphasizes on equal opportunity in scientific publishing, and is committed towards bridging the existing knowledge gap in cancer research between developed and developing countries. AMOR is keen to highlight the current challenges and opportunities of cancer research in developing countries, and the creation of a special issue dedicated to this subject is especially relevant and urgent to the broad community of cancer researchers because:

(i) It provides a much-needed platform to clinicians and researchers from developing countries to share im-

Figure 1. Projected global cancer incidence and mortality rates according to geographical areas in 2012. Reproduced with permission from IARC.

Figure 2. Comparison of publication output between developed and developing countries from 2011 to 2016. Data were extracted from Web of Science and the figures for 2016 are projected values.

Figure 3. Percentage of publication output according to the most published developing countries. Data were extracted from Web of Science.

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portant region-specific data, statistics, observations, and findings with the international community. This will not only improve the visibility of researchers from developing countries, but also enrich existing medical literature with updated information on the progress of cancer research in the developing world.

(ii) It gives clinicians, researchers, and policy makers from developed nations the opportunity to assess the existing and projected capability of developing countries in coping with the disease burden of cancer. Moreover, it is expected to equip stakeholders with key data and information to better manage vital resources, i.e. the allocation of funding and creation of knowledge transfer programs, moving forward.

It takes collective efforts to address the escalating threat of cancer mortality and morbidity in the developing world. In order to introduce effective long-term solutions, it is important to first gain a thorough understanding of low and middle income countries’ current capability (i.e., knowledge and infrastructure) in handling the disease. Therefore, the curation of a special issue incorporating all relevant cancer-related studies, focusing on developing countries, will be an essential step in realizing the long-term plan of reducing cancer burden in much of the developing world.

For this proposed special issue, we welcome submissions in the forms of original research articles, case studies, and reviews, as well as editorials and perspective articles on:

(i) Clinical studies focusing on the diagnoses and treatments of common/rare cancers in developing countries, particularly those that present novel or innovative methods in a localized setting.

(ii) Basic science research that highlights the development of emerging or improved therapeutics and drugs.

(iii) Innovative cancer/oncology treatment modalities used in developing countries that have been adapted from conventional approaches.

(iv) Analysis of clinical data collected from developing countries on cancer-related incidence.

(v) Health policies and guidelines on managing cancers in a resource-constrained setting.

Notes and references:
1. Developing economies are defined according to World Bank’s list of low and middle income countries. Available from: http://data.worldbank.org/income-level/low-income

AMOR invites authors to submit their manuscripts for the proposed Special Issue at www.advmodoncolres.com. The tentative deadline for submission is on February 20th 2017.