

EDITORIAL



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World champions: Improving global access in radiation oncology

Welcome to the June issue of *ARO*, which focuses on the ever-important topic of global health. We are excited to present three compelling review articles centering on progress and opportunities surrounding global radiation oncology workforce needs by 2030, treatment access in Indonesia, and cancer control in Ghana, all of which offer SA-CME credit. We also feature an excellent research article detailing access and outcomes among indigenous populations in Canada, and several enlightening perspective and profile articles on global accomplishments and challenges in radiation treatment.

Yet, along with our excitement about the issue are several sobering and recurrent themes: limited access to care in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), perpetually scarce education and training in radiation oncology, dated or lack of equipment, and high cancer mortality rates. In low-income countries, for instance, more than 70% of cancer patients are expected to die from their disease compared to about 30% in Western countries.¹ In Indonesia this year, only 93 board-certified radiation oncologists and 65 residents in training are available to serve a nation of 260 million people. And in parts of Tanzania, donated linear accelerators are sitting idle due to the high service costs that preclude their use.

This is where “world champions” come in—those who heed the call to advocate for and improve radiation treatment in developing nations, be it through research efforts, philanthropy, global health residencies or other international partnerships and projects. Our new inaugural column, Global Perspectives chronicles one such example of the eye-opening experiences and accomplishments of a resident in Mwanza, Tanzania, as a Global Health Scholar. We also present a special feature profiling the incredible work of the nonprofit group, RadiatingHope, whose prayer flag and mountain-climbing treks, among other missions, serve to expand the reach of radiation therapy in regions of need. The Technology Trends department highlights the global work of additional advocacy groups, professional societies as well as vendors, and this month’s Resident Voice shares key lessons that may inspire others to embrace a global health career, one that truly makes a meaningful difference in the lives of many.

Another common theme in the issue is the underlying impetus for global health initiatives: health equity and universal care. We hope our articles help increase your awareness of this important topic and inspire some of you to consider making a difference.

Please enjoy our global health issue, and thank you, as always, for your continued support!

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REFERENCE

1. Bray F, Ferlay J, Soerjomataram I, et al. Global cancer statistics 2018: GLOBOCAN estimates of incidence and mortality worldwide for 36 cancers in 185 countries. *CA: Cancer J Clin*. 2018;68:394-424.