

Review of: "Implementation of the Adult Oncology Unit at Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH)"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

When critically reviewing a research article like "Implementation of the Adult Oncology Unit at Muhimbili National Hospital," several potential issues can be highlighted, especially those dealing with complex healthcare implementations in resource-limited settings:

1. Scope and Focus: The article primarily focuses on the establishment and early operational phase of the oncology unit. A more comprehensive approach might include long-term outcome measures, patient survival rates, and quality of life assessments post-treatment.

Solution: Future research could include longitudinal studies to track patient outcomes over time, evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the oncology unit in the long run.

2. Methodological Details: The document does not provide detailed methodologies used for facility assessment, data collection, and analysis. This lack of methodological transparency can limit the replicability of the study and its findings in other contexts.

Solution: Include a clear description of the methods used, such as data collection techniques, sample size determination, and the analytical approach. This would enhance the replicability and credibility of the study.

3. Statistical Analysis: There is an absence of quantitative data and statistical analysis. Inclusion of detailed patient outcome data, demographic information, and statistical analyses would strengthen the validity of the conclusions drawn.

Solution: Incorporate statistical methods to analyze patient data. This could involve descriptive statistics, survival analysis, or other relevant statistical techniques to quantify outcomes.

4. Comparison with Existing Literature: While the challenges of cancer care in low- and middle-income countries are mentioned, there is a lack of comparison with similar initiatives in other countries. Comparative analysis could provide a richer context and more robust conclusions.

Solution: Conduct a literature review to compare and contrast this initiative with similar projects globally, providing a broader context and identifying best practices.

5. Sustainability and Future Directions: The article could benefit from a more detailed discussion of the sustainability of the oncology unit, including funding sources, ongoing training of staff, and strategies for continuous improvement.

Solution: Address long-term sustainability, including funding strategies, ongoing staff training, and plans for continuous improvement and expansion.

6. Patient Perspectives: The article lacks direct input or feedback from patients and their families, which is crucial in understanding the real-world impact of the oncology unit on patient care and satisfaction.

Solution: Include surveys or interviews with patients and families to gather their perspectives, enhancing the understanding of patient care and satisfaction.

7. Ethical Considerations: There is no mention of ethical considerations or approvals, which are essential in healthcare research, especially when patient data and outcomes are involved.

Solution: Ensure that ethical approvals are obtained and mentioned, and discuss how patient confidentiality and data protection are ensured.

8. Generalizability: The findings and experiences detailed in the article may not be easily generalizable to other settings, especially in countries with different healthcare infrastructures and resources.

Solution: Discuss the specific context of the study in detail and be cautious in generalizing the findings. Suggest areas for further research in different settings.

9. In-depth Analysis of Challenges: While challenges are mentioned, a more in-depth analysis of these, including potential strategies to overcome them, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in implementing such a unit.

Solution: Provide a detailed analysis of each challenge faced, including strategic and operational issues, and suggest potential solutions or strategies used to overcome them.

10. Collaboration and Stakeholder Involvement: The role of different stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, and international partners, could be more clearly outlined to understand the collaborative effort required for such initiatives.

Solution: Elaborate on the roles and contributions of various stakeholders, including government, NGOs, and international partners, to provide a comprehensive view of collaborative efforts.

11. Clinical Protocols and Guidelines: Details on the specific clinical protocols, treatment guidelines, and decision-making processes within the unit could offer valuable insights for similar setups elsewhere.

Solution: Include specific information about clinical protocols, treatment guidelines, and decision-making processes to aid other institutions looking to establish similar units.

Additional Points

1. I am of the opinion that this is better suited as a case study as there is no research element. Say, Facility Assessment and Implementation is a requirement and duty, and not research where hypotheses are formed. However, this article can be a pathway for other units trying to implement such changes in their hospitals and hence has better utility as a case study.
2. Certain facts need to be justified. It is stated that the major cancer patients are cervical, breast, and prostate in the initial paragraphs, but in the figure, separate statistics are portrayed. Such a discrepancy in the article should be meticulously examined.
3. All program aims are included in the limitations of the program. Please look into it.
4. The study did not show any of these outcomes after the establishment and implementation. Before and after data are essential to show the utility of such efforts.
5. Avoid general statements like strict adherence to international guidelines was implemented. Rather, give proper protocol names, etc.
6. Instead of simply narrating what happened, why not critically analyze your situation and provide challenges and limitations to the implementation efforts?

These points represent areas where the article could be improved or expanded upon for a more comprehensive, detailed, and academically rigorous presentation of the research.

My impression

This article has global importance because it provides experience in setting up in a resource-limited setting. Such documents are lighthouses for other hospitals. Thus, it becomes even more important for the authors to refine it based on the reviews provided and provide hardcore data. Please do not shy away from providing data because of the spearheading you are doing and the vast potential of the experience to be replicated.

3.5 Stars because of the shortcomings. With the data provided and changes as suggested, 5 Stars all the way.

Regards, and sorry if I have hurt you. Please consider my review with a constructive criticism mindset.

