



ASEAN Costs in Oncology: ACTION Study

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The George Institute
for Global Health

Facts:

- Cancer has been cited as the leading cause of mortality globally, accounting for 13% (or 7.4 million) of all deaths annually (WHO, 2010) with 70% of these occurring in low and middle income countries.
- For some cancers the one year survival rate in the SEA region is similar to the ten year survival rate in western countries.
- Being diagnosed with cancer in SEA is potentially disastrous, as over 75% of patients will experience death or financial catastrophe 12 months after diagnosis.

Supporters:

The George Institute for Global Health

Roche Asia Pacific

Background:

- It is projected that mortality from cancer will increase significantly over the coming years with approximately 13 million deaths per year worldwide expected by 2030. The trend is even more striking in Asia where the number of deaths per year in 2002 of 3.5 million is expected to increase to 8.1 million by 2020 (Lancet, 2010).
- The burden of cancer is increasing in the ASEAN region, due to population ageing and growth and the adoption of cancer-associated lifestyle behaviours.
- Cancer, particularly through the costs associated with treatment and its impact on people's ability to work, can have a profound economic effect on households. Most at risk are the poor and under-insured.

Aims:

The aim of ACTION was to assess the impact of cancer on economic outcomes across 8 ASEAN countries – Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Methods:

- This was a longitudinal study of 9513 consecutively recruited patients in South East Asia with a first time diagnosis of cancer in hospital (public and private).
- Patients were followed throughout the first year after their cancer diagnosis and asked questions about costs, economic wellbeing and quality of life. Data were also collected on clinical outcomes and treatment course.

Findings:

- One year after a diagnosis of cancer, 29% of patients had died and 48% experienced financial catastrophe (out of pocket costs exceeding 30% of annual income).
- The risk of dying from cancer and facing catastrophic costs was associated with more advanced cancer at diagnosis and low socioeconomic status.
- Those without health insurance were also more likely to experience financial catastrophe and die at 12 months.
- For patients indicated for surgery at diagnosis, 23% had discontinued treatment by 3 months; with such discontinuation being more likely in those without health insurance.

Impact:

- A cancer diagnosis in South East Asia is potentially disastrous, with over 75% of patients experiencing death or financial catastrophe within 1 year
- The ACTION study has been used to support policies throughout South-East Asia to initiate and/or extend universal health care coverage programs.
- The ACTION study is a clear signal to policy makers.

Contact:

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