

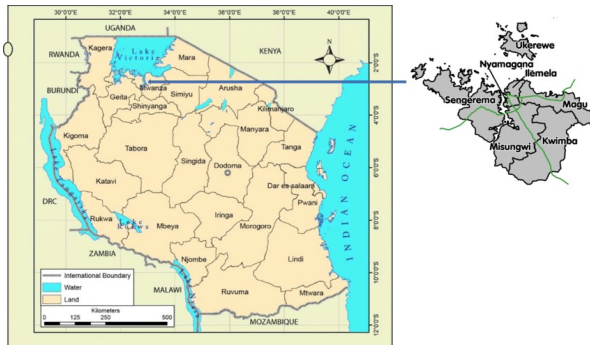
Stigma Towards Pediatric Cancer Experienced by Pediatric Cancer Patients and their Caregivers in Tanzania



SUHANA POSANI¹ MSGH Candidate

Faculty Lead: DR. KRISTIN SCHROEDER^{1,2}

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES



Map of the districts in the Mwanza Region, Tanzania

- Research has shown the five-year survival rate of childhood cancer in HICs is 80%, while the survival rate in LMICs is around 30%^{1,2}.
- This gap may be partially attributed to treatment abandonment of pediatric patients due to stigma/false beliefs about cancer^{3,4}.

Objective:

- Identify the types of perceived stigma pediatric cancer patients who have completed treatment and their caregivers' have experienced from community members in Mwanza, Tanzania.

1. Armstrong, G.T., et al., Late mortality among 5-year survivors of childhood cancer: a summary from the Childhood Cancer Survivor Study. *J Clin Oncol*, 2009. 27(14): p. 2328-38.
 2. Lam, Catherine G., et al. "Science and health for all children with cancer." *Science* 363.6432 (2019): 1182-1186.
 3. Gupta, S., et al. The magnitude and predictors of abandonment of therapy in paediatric acute leukaemia in middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Eur J Cancer*, 2013. 49(11): p. 2555-64.
 4. Friedrich, P., et al., Magnitude of Treatment Abandonment in Childhood Cancer. *PLoS One*, 2015. 10(9): p. e0135230.

METHODOLOGY

- Focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interview (IDI) guides were created to explore major areas of stigma.

Community Aspects	Individual Aspects
Avoidance	Personal Responsibility
Severity	Self-Stigma
Policy Opposition	Perceived Stigma
Awkwardness	Label Avoidance
Financial Discrimination	Stigma by Association
Public Stigma	
Structural Stigma	
Health Practitioner Stigma	
Employment Stigma	

- Participants were chosen through convenience sampling with an emphasis on including diversity in multiple factors including gender, age, type of cancer, time since treatment, and region of Mwanza.
- FGDs and IDIs were conducted in Swahili between July 13, 2022 and July 22, 2022 at Buzungu Medical Center in Mwanza, Tanzania.

Patient/Caregiver	Age of Patient	# of Participants	Gender	
FGD #1	Caregivers	<13 y/o	6	Mixed
FGD #2	Caregivers	13-17 y/o, <2 years off therapy	7	Mixed
FGD #3	Patients	18+	5	Mixed
FGD #4	Patients	13-17 y/o, <2 years off therapy	5	Mixed
IDI #1	Patient	18+	1	Male
IDI #2	Patient	18+	1	Male
IDI #3	Patient	18+	1	Male
IDI #4	Patient	18+	1	Male
IDI #5	Patient	18+	1	Female
IDI #6	Caregiver	13-17 y/o, >2 years off therapy	1	Male
IDI #7	Caregiver	13-17 y/o, >2 years off therapy	1	Male
IDI #8	Patient	13-17 y/o, >2 years off therapy	1	Female
IDI #9	Patient	13-17 y/o, >2 years off therapy	1	Female

FUTURE ANALYSIS & CONCLUSIONS

- Data will be coded and qualitatively analysed by thematic content with the support of NVIVO12 software.
- Stigma may influence a patient's decision to present for cancer care or treatment. To curb untrue or negative beliefs about childhood cancer, this research is necessary to find what stigma pediatric cancer patients and their caregivers face.
- Insights gained from this project will be used to create culturally and contextually relevant awareness interventions to decrease stigma towards childhood cancer and increase cancer health-seeking behaviour in Tanzanian communities.



Members of a focus group discussion in Mwanza, Tanzania