Is the provision of medical equipment enough? Addressing the need for adequate training and support to maximise the effectiveness of introducing modern equipment into the developing world
Cancer situation in the developing world

• By 2017, the predicted death toll due to cancer in developing countries will be greater than 10 million.

• This will exceed the number of deaths caused by HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria combined.

• 150% increase in cancer deaths by 2020

• Majority of cancer patients require radiotherapy

• Africa has less than 10% of the radiotherapy provision it needs, and few trained workers

• Most patients die without treatment
How do we solve this problem?

- Developed countries such as the UK have considerable resources and expertise
- This can be applied to support developing cancer centres
- Building training expertise in the discipline locally leads to autonomy and sustainability

- The paRTner project is to instigate and develop a continuing voluntary partnership infrastructure of high quality training and support for radiotherapy professionals within developing countries
What is the paRTner Initiative?

- paRTner initiative is a consortium of UK hospitals and universities, including:
  - UCL
  - UCL Partners
  - Royal Berkshire Hospital
What is paRTner doing to help change this situation?

Aim:
Instigate and develop a continuing infrastructure of high quality training and support for radiotherapy professionals in developing countries.

This is done in three main ways:
– Education
– Professional Mentoring
– Equipment
Education: Train the trainer approach

*Short term*
UK experts to train key healthcare workers in the use of modern equipment & protocols

*Long term*
Partner and support local trainers / universities
- Set up a training network
- Build local expertise
- Maximise number of trainees with reduced UK effort
- Build regional autonomy
Professional Mentoring

• Support the educational package with a partnership mentoring infrastructure
  – Build a network of voluntary UK experts
  – Site visits by UK expert partners
  – Phone / skype / email support
  – Provide cross-checks & back-up during new clinical protocols

• Facilitate an expert base network amongst supported regions
  – promotes cross talk and information sharing of common local problems and solutions
  – Builds autonomy

• Annual regional workshop/conference
  – Provide master classes and forum for discussion of local issues
Sourcing Equipment

• Work with overseas partner to identify need
  – Peripheral testing & maintenance equipment often not budgeted/underestimated
  – Audit their kit to identify what is missing

• Rapid equipment turnover in the UK
  – NHS medical equipment has a lifecycle much shorter than the actual lifetime (upgrades, changes in service delivery, maintenance agreements)

• Many NHS staff keen to engage with initiatives like paRTner
  – ensures that developing countries have access to good quality donated medical devices
Conclusions

• Modern cancer care is technology driven
  • requires expertise not available in developing world

• Therefore,
  • it is not only essential to provide top quality equipment to developing countries,
  • it is also essential to provide a high level of education and support,
  • which allows these countries to run self sufficient medical centres providing world class care.
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