



MERCK CANCER ACCESS PROGRAM

Cancer Access Program Report





Right to left: Dr. Bonginkosi Shadrack Shoba, South Africa, Dr. Angela McLigeyo, Kenya, Dr. Mohammed Ezzi, Kenya

Merck, University of Nairobi Oncology Fellowship Program

In Africa - For Africa



MERCK CANCER ACCESS PROGRAM overview:

Merck Cancer Access Program is part of Merck Foundation's commitment to improve patient's access to quality and equitable cancer care in underserved communities.

The Program builds cancer care capacity, supports the implementation and development of specialized healthcare solutions and is augmented by community awareness campaigns to contribute to the reduction of cancer incidences and improve survival rates.

The lack of financial means is not the only challenge in Africa and developing countries, but the scarcity of trained health care personnel capable of tackling prevention, early diagnosis and management of cancer at all levels of health care systems is an even bigger challenge. Therefore, the program consists of three initiatives to enhance cancer care on all relevant levels:

- **Merck Oncology Fellowship Program** focuses on building professional cancer care capacity with the aim to increase the limited number of oncologists in Africa and developing countries. Oncology Fellowship Program of one year, one and half years, two years and Master degree in Medical Oncology of two years, conducted in India, Malaysia, Kenya and Egypt in partnership with African Ministries of Health, Local Governments, and Academia.

Launched in 2016, over 80 candidates from 26 African countries have enrolled in the Merck Oncology Fellowship Program. The program will continue to build cancer care capability in African countries such as Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

- **Merck More Than a Patient** empowers women cancer survivors to reclaim their lives by reintegration into society.

- **Merck Community Awareness** shares accurate cancer information to help in tackling myths, misconception, and stigma through medical camps and social media.

MERCK FOUNDATION ALUMNI



Dr. Nihad Salifu

Paediatric Medical Oncology Fellow, August 2017

Merck Foundation Alumna

Ghana



“Currently, Ghana has a population of about 26 million with a cancer rate of 109 per 100,000 people, and yet there is no single trained medical oncologist in Ghana. In addition, there are only three paediatric oncologists in the whole country, and our cancer cure rate is very low in children- it is about 20% when cure rates are approaching 80% in many developed parts of the world.

This huge human resource deficit in childhood cancer care is the main motivating factor for me applying to be considered for this training. I will benefit from this great opportunity being given to our country by Merck Foundation. The Merck Oncology Fellowship Program will add to the few oncologists in Ghana, to ease the workload and improve quality of patient care.”



Dr. Abdulkadir M

Paediatric Medical Oncology Fellow, December 2018

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Ethiopia



“Ethiopia is a country with approximately 100 million population. Currently, the country has three paediatric oncologists to serve the stated population. I am a faculty member and general paediatrician serving kids suffering from cancer with no additional formal training in paediatric oncology. Merck Oncology Fellowship Program will help me to update and upgrade my knowledge and skills in Paediatric Oncology; this helps me to give the appropriate and quality cancer care to our children in Ethiopia hence improve their survival rate.”



Dr. Christina V. Malichewe

Medical Oncology Fellow, August 2017

Merck Foundation Alumna

Tanzania



"Cancer is a growing concern in Tanzania, and limited facilities and few health-care providers against the high rising number of patients diagnosed at advanced stages pose a great challenge to a developing country like Tanzania. Unfortunately, there are only two medical oncologists in a country of approximately 50 million people, one studied in Italy and another in China. We need more specialized oncologists in this field. Thank you, Merck Foundation for starting this program!! However, it is only through unique opportunities such as the Merck Africa Oncology Fellowship Program we can make the needed change in our societies to improve patient access to cancer care." Christina Malichewe said.



Dr. Natnael Alemayehu

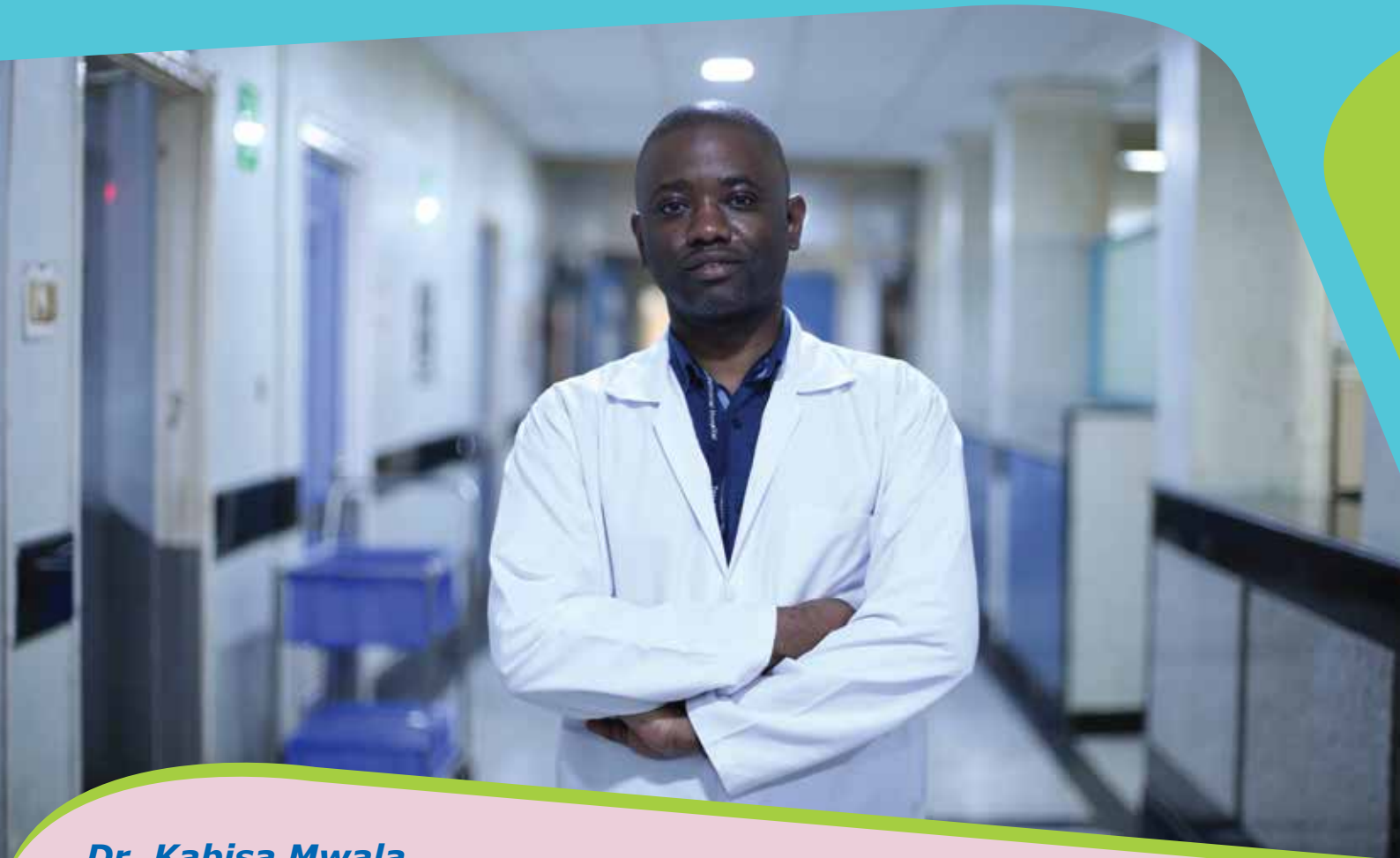
Adult Medical Oncology Fellow, July 2018

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Ethiopia



“Currently, there is not even a single oncologist in Southern part of Ethiopia with an estimated population of 18 million. There are only three oncologists in Ethiopia for about 100 million population. Merck Oncology Fellowship Program is a golden path to tackle the growing challenge posed by cancer in Africa. I was delighted to know about and to be part of it. By completing this fellowship program, I feel that I will not only further my career, but I will also be a critical asset to my country and my people to address their suffering.”



Dr. Kabisa Mwala

Surgical Oncology Fellow, July 2018

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Zambia



"I am a general surgeon deeply interested in surgical oncology because of my passion for helping patients ravaged by cancer especially, women with breast cancer. The Merck surgical oncology fellowship will enhance my knowledge and skills in the field of surgical oncology to better contribute to managing cancer patients in Zambia. My country and our patients will benefit from this much-needed skill and knowledge that I will gain from this training."



Dr. Paul Kamfwa

Gynaecologic Oncology Fellow, July 2018

**Merck Foundation Alumnus
Zambia**



"I will be the first gynecologic oncologist in Zambia, Thanks to the Merck Oncology Fellowship Program. The Fellowship will help me to receive extensive surgical exposure to gynaecologic procedures, chemotherapy and learn the new and advanced techniques of radiotherapy. Zambian women will have a quality and continuity of care since surgery and administering of chemo radiotherapy can be facilitated by the same person in their home country."



Dr. Justin Mulindwa

Paediatric Medical Oncology Fellow, July 2018

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Zambia



“Currently, I am based at the Cancer Diseases Hospital which is the only centre providing paediatric oncology care for children across a country of an estimated 15 million people with an estimated 45% being in the paediatric age group of up to 15 years old. Therefore, the Merck Oncology Fellowship Program is very important for Zambia. It provided me and other doctors with a unique training opportunity that will enhance paediatric oncology care, paediatric oncology research and teaching in the country.”



Dr. Damas Dukundane

Adult Medical Oncology Fellow, December 2018

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Rwanda



“Merck Foundation is making history in Africa. When the opportunity of Medical oncology fellowship was announced at the Health Ministry of Rwanda, I immediately showed my interest in it. Cancer care in Rwanda is still a scarcity, for slightly over 11 million of Rwandans, we have probably only one oncologist. Cancer is still a death sentence for many Rwandans who cannot access the necessary cancer care that is often sought abroad.

Not all solutions will come in one day, but for my patients and myself this is a hopeful step towards achieving adequate cancer care in Rwanda and the region. I have a lot of expectations from the program and what to achieve after the training. I hope to become a leader in cancer treatment, researcher, and advocate for accessible treatments especially for underprivileged communities at risk.

I sincerely appreciate the Merck Africa Oncology Fellowship as one of the many Merck Foundation initiatives to touch lives around Africa and in the world.”



Dr. Musana Othiniel

Gynaecologic-Oncology Fellow, January 2019

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Uganda



“Uganda as a country lacks a national cancer screening programme yet cervical and breast cancer remain the most common cancers and account for the highest proportion of cancers requiring radiotherapy. The country also has a shortage of good gynaecologic–oncologists, researchers and educators in Uganda hence limiting access for Ugandan women with cancer to screening, diagnostic and treatment services.

The Merck Africa Oncology Fellowship Program will expand my knowledge on selection of appropriate clinical and research methodology used in gynaecologic-oncology. I hope to improve my skills in carrying out appropriate and evidence based clinical diagnosis, and treatment, but also to empower me with excellent clinical educational skills to mentor other young health workers.”



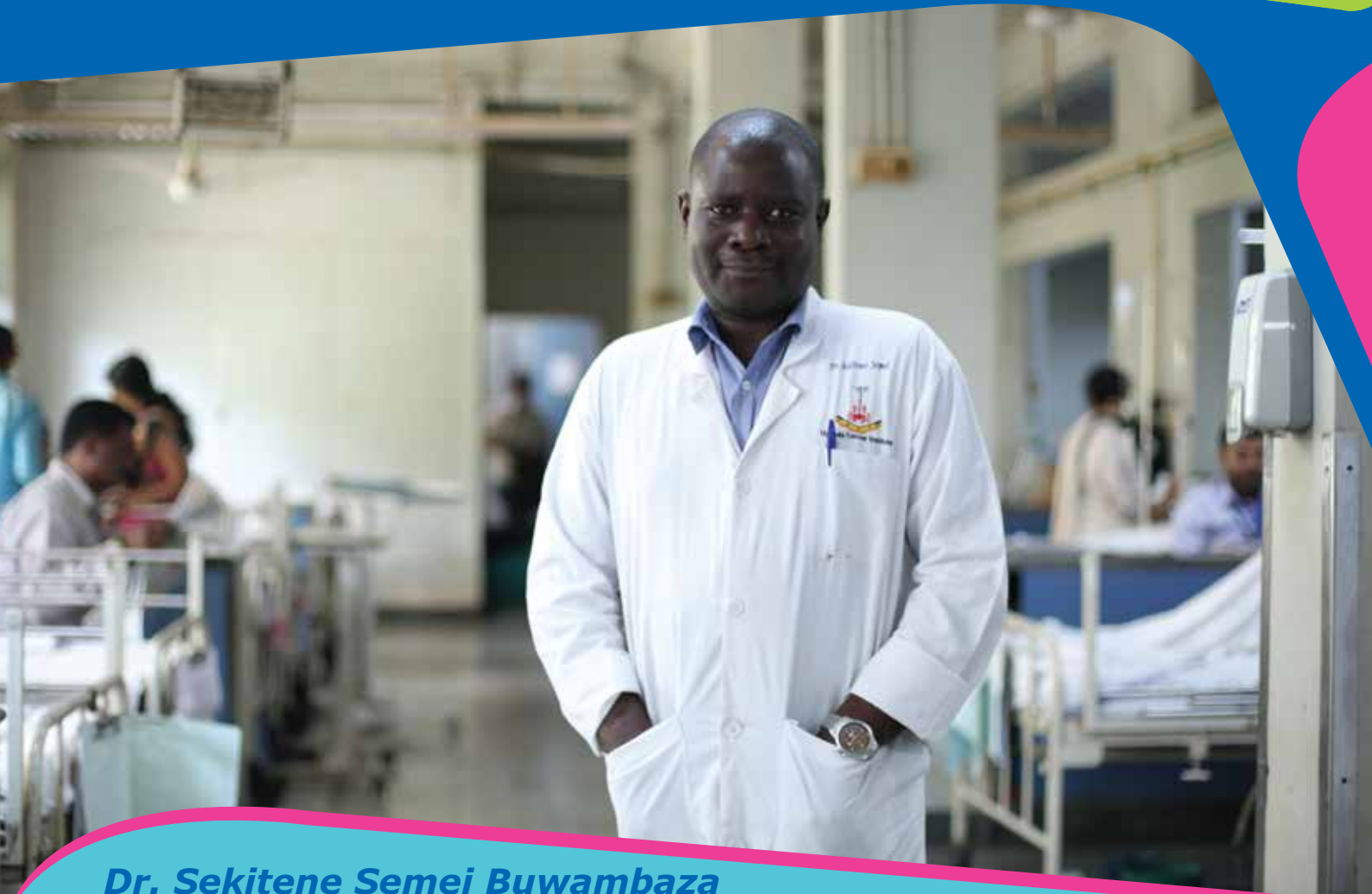
Dr. Josephine Augustinus

Medical Oncology Fellow, September 2018

Merck Foundation Alumna

Namibia 

"Namibia population is 2.5 million, and more than 3000 new cancer cases get diagnosed on a yearly basis. I am confident that by the end of the one-year fellowship, I will be better equipped to manage cancer patients through preventions, early diagnosis, treatment and palliative care. I sincerely want to thank Merck Foundation for this great program that will transform the lives of cancer patients and their families. Please continue your great work."



Dr. Sekitene Semei Buwambaza

Medical Oncology Fellow, September 2018

Merck Foundation Alumnus

Uganda 

“Coming from a humble background, and having worked at Uganda Cancer Institute since 2010, initially as a volunteer, I have enjoyed helping our cancer patients many of whom come from less privileged communities.

Merck Africa Oncology Fellowship program is significant to me because it is giving me an opportunity to learn and improve the way I have been managing cancer patients.

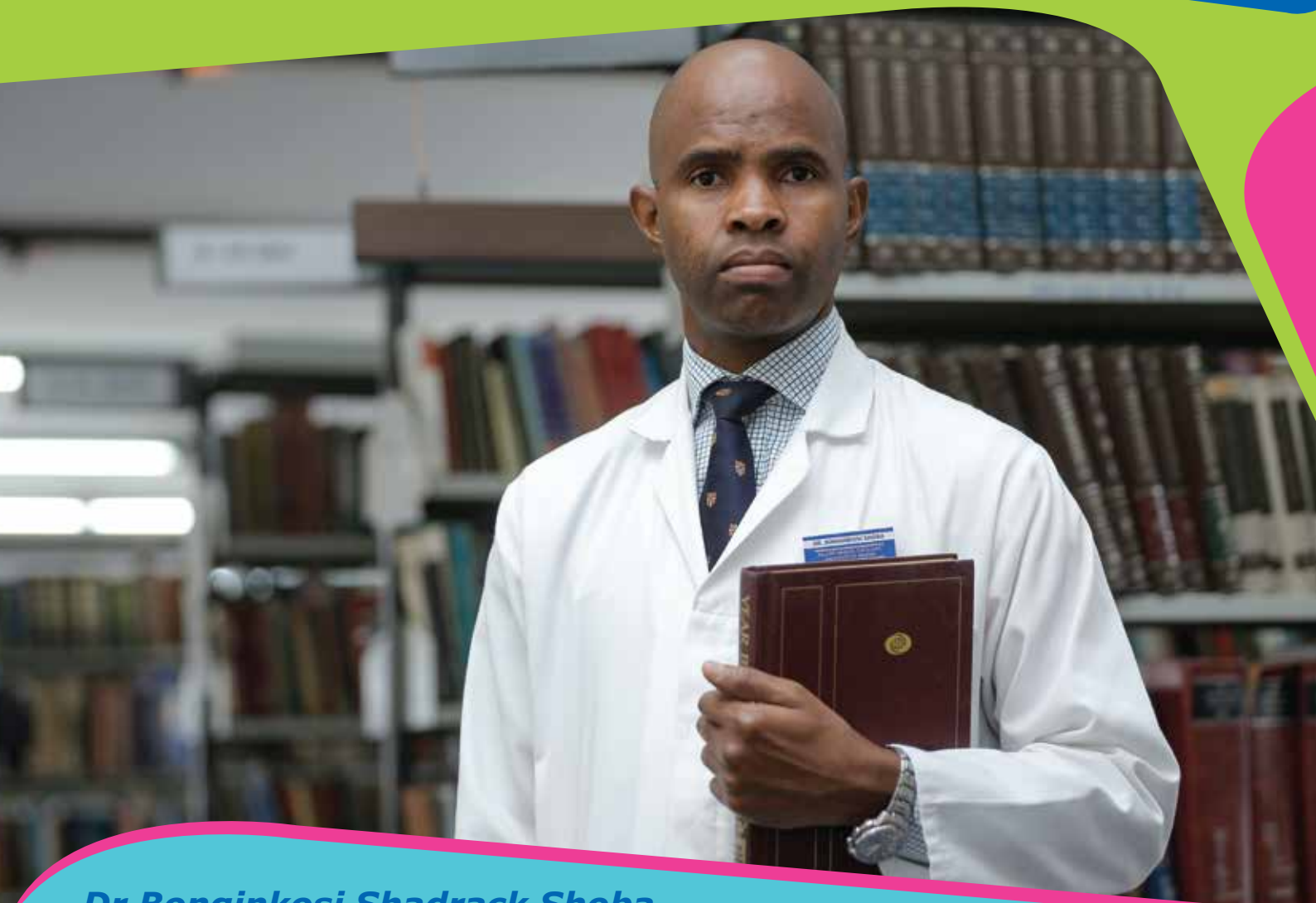
A bond with Merck Foundation as alumnus is going to keep me updated with new developments in cancer care and exposure to a variety of learning seminars and workshops. All these and other benefits mean that my patients in Uganda will get better services and my dream of extending quality care to those who need it, will become a reality.”



Dr. Adane Nigussie Robi
Palliative Care Fellow, March 2018
Merck Foundation Alumnus
Ethiopia



"I was delighted to know about and to be part of the fellowship program on palliative care that Merck Foundation is planning to give. After completing the fellowship program, I will be the only person with palliative care training in my hospital, we have only three oncologists in Ethiopia, and only two of them are giving palliative care to patients. I have a plan to start a palliative care training after completing my fellowship here. Palliative care is not only about resources, above anything it needs a trained healthcare professional. About this Merck Foundation is taking the pivotal role in my country, Ethiopia."



Dr Bonginkosi Shadrack Shoba

Medical Oncology Fellow, September 2019

Merck Foundation Alumni

South Africa



“South Africa has not more than a mere handful of oncologists, all of them in Johannesburg, Cape Town or Durban. There are no dedicated oncology centres even in these big cities. There is currently one public stem cell centre in Cape Town that caters to three patients at a time. Sad but true, a diagnosis of any form of cancer including early-stage Hodgkins lymphoma in South Africa carries a swift, cruel death sentence, particularly so if you happen to reside in a rural area, as about 80% of South Africa’s population does. Therefore, Merck Oncology Fellowship program at the University of Nairobi will help me to transform the lives of those black, poor, rural, young folk I watch dying mercilessly, avoidable deaths from even easily treatable Hodgkin’s lymphoma in my country. ”



Dr. Angela McLigeyo,
Medical Oncology Fellow, September 2019

Merck Foundation Alumni
Kenya



“The need to improve the quality of cancer care in Kenya is critical. Especially in the setting of the growing cancer burden in Kenya and the high mortality rates that accompanies it. Also, the majority of cancer patients in Kenya have to travel out of the country to seek treatment due to high local treatment costs and the shortage of specialists.

The ‘Merck Africa Oncology Fellowship Program’ in partnership with the University of Nairobi, aptly suits our need of increasing the number of trained oncologists in the continent.”



Dr. Mohammed Ezzi
Medical Oncology Fellow, September 2019
Merck Foundation Alumnus
Kenya



“The Kenyan government has made cancer a national disaster, setting up regional cancer centres, and buying equipment worth billions of shillings. However, the human resource capacity required for managing cancer is lagging behind. We need the personnel - the oncologists to complement efforts by government and other organizations so that we can effectively tackle this menace.

The two-year Merck Oncology Fellowship program in partnership with the University of Nairobi is the first medical oncology fellowship program to be conducted in Sub Saharan Africa. It is the beacon of hope for all Africans.”



**One year Merck Oncology Fellowship Program
in partnership with Tata Memorial Hospital, India**

South - South Collaboration



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