

**Improving Cancer Care for Children Around the World:  
The Role of Pediatric Oncology Social Work  
in  
Global Health Programs**

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**Global Pediatric Cancer Survival Rates**

*...one indisputable truth defines pediatric oncology:  
the most important prognostic factor for a child  
with cancer is where he or she was born.*

Rodríguez-Galindo et al. (2015)

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**Global Pediatric Cancer Survival Rates**

**300,000**

80% Low and Middle Income countries (LMIC)  
20% High Income countries (HIC)

World Health Organization - International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

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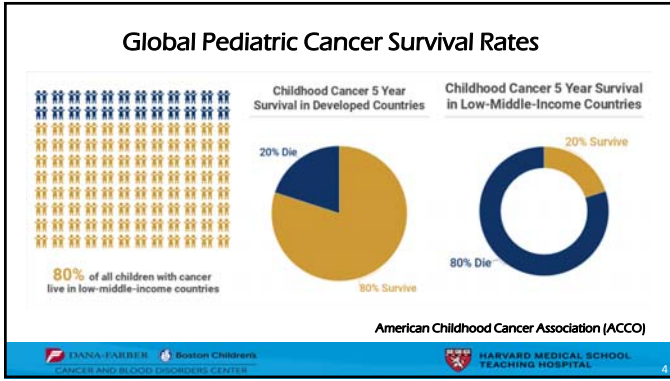
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### What is Global Health?

Global health is an area for study, research, and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Global health emphasizes transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions; involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration; and is a synthesis of population-based prevention with individual-level clinical care.

Koplan JP et al. (2009)

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	Geography	Cooperation	Populations	Access	Disciplines
<b>Global Health</b>	Health issues that transcend national boundaries	Global	Prevention and clinical care	Health equity among nations	Highly interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary
<b>International Health</b>	Focus on issues outside of one's own country	Bi-national	Prevention and clinical care	Help other nations	Embraces a few disciplines
<b>Public Health</b>	Focus on specific communities or countries	National	Prevention	Health equity within a nation or community	Multidisciplinary, particularly with health and social sciences

Koplan JP et al. (2009)

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**TROPICAL MEDICINE**      **MEDICAL MISSIONS**  
**COLONIALISM**  
**MILITARY MEDICINE**  
**NEOCOLONIALISM**  
**INTERNATIONAL HEALTH**      **NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)**      **GLOBAL HEALTH**  
**NEOLIBERALISM**

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**Pediatric Cancer in LMIC**

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Late Presentation	International Partnerships to:
Under Diagnosis	Build Capacity
Abandonment	Incorporate Research
Malnutrition and other Comorbidities	Implement Intensity-Graduated Tx.
Suboptimal Support and Palliative Care	
Limited Access to Curative Therapies	

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**Challenges to care in LMIC**

- Few trained/specialized RN's
- High patient-to-nurse ratios (10-1, 14-1, 26-1)
- Shortage or absence of trained oncologists
- Drug shortages (tx, support, pain)
- Limited pain and procedural support (LP's without sedation)
- Shortage or absence of trained psychosocial staff
- Hospital policies limiting patient/family use of existing supports
- Limited resources to address concrete needs

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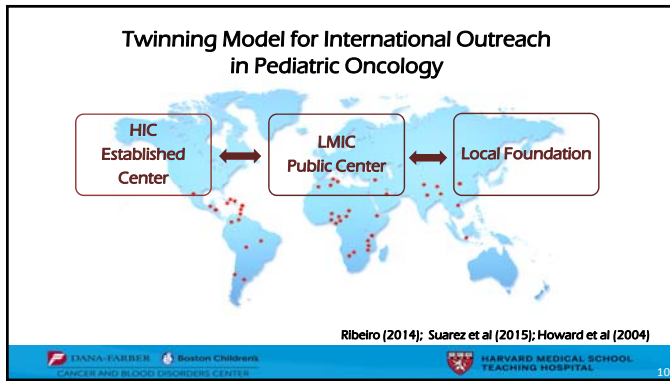
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### Twinning Model

*"Projects must be locally driven by the team in the LIC, but volunteers and funding organisations can help to make progress possible. There is mutual benefit for all concerned."*

- Local recognition of a need to develop a service
- Strong local medical/nursing leadership
- Creation of a team/hospital unit
- Local community mobilisation (friends/parents)
- Recruitment to the cause of hospital management/health planners/health ministries
- Then external support sought/advice/funding
- Long term collaboration with a twinned centre

Hopkins J, Burns E, and Eden T (2013)

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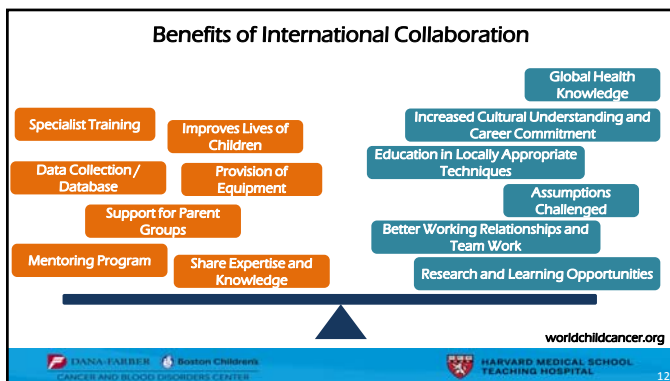
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**How I Live**  
 Persistent Productions



<https://vimeo.com/301153313>

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**Cancer Patients and Their Families**

(cancer patients) “aren’t people who have psychological illness. These are people who are confronted with a very, very challenging life situation and who need to mobilize their full strength and the strength of their families in order to meet with these things, to live well despite cancer.”

- Rachel Naomi Remen

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**The Role of Social Work**

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes **social change** and development, **social cohesion**, and the **empowerment and liberation of people**. Principles of social justice, human rights, **collective responsibility** and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”

International Federation of Social Workers

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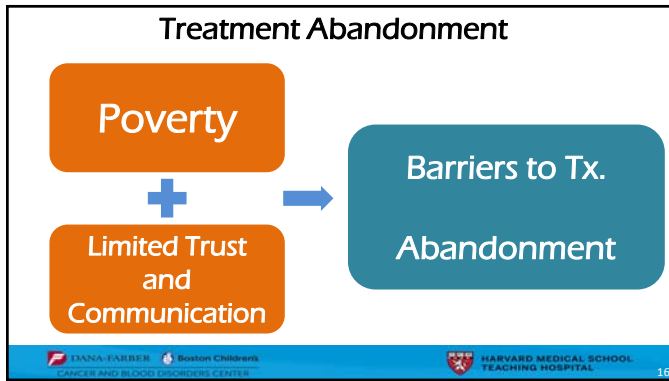
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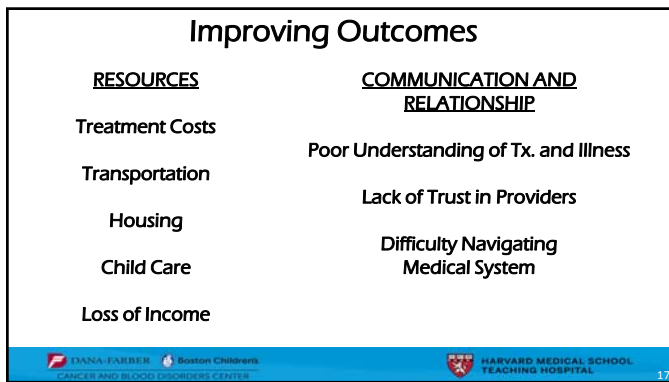
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**King George's Medical University, India. Retrospective Study of pediatric ALL patients 1995-2017**

- Phase 1: (1995 – 2003) No substantial support - **Abandonment Rate = 21%**
- Phase 2: (2003 – 2009)  
Financial Support: chemotherapy and antibiotics – **Abandonment Rate = 14.5%**
- Phase 3: (2009 -2017)
  - Phase 3a (2009 – 2014) Financial support and Social support with group counselling  
Chemo, antibiotics, labs, procedures, and imaging plus: food, lodging, transportation, job opportunities.  
**Abandonment Rate = 12.5%**
  - Phase 3b (2015 - 2017) Financial support and Social support with intensified group counselling  
Chemo, antibiotics, labs, procedures, and imaging plus: food, lodging, transportation, job opportunities.  
**Abandonment Rate = 5.9%**

Alam and Kumar (2018)

Dana-Farber Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center | Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital

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**Hospital Nacional de Niños Benjamin Bloom – San Salvador**

Understanding and reducing abandonment.

Caregiver and health team perspectives on abandonment are reported using the explanatory model (EM) framework.

Medical team: EM = only biomedical treatment was effective for cure

Parents: EM = belief in miraculous cure, increasing impoverishment and misgivings toward treatment and outcomes.

Zobeck, M. (Producer). (2019, January 3). *Global Health & Childhood Cancer* [Audio podcast]; Rossell N et al. (2016)



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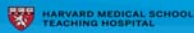
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**Case Examples**

- Myanmar: Child and parent – procedural support
- Colombia: Communication – patient, family, and providers. Amputation
- Egypt: Provider distress, EOL patients.



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**Participating in pediatric oncology global health**

1. Reflect on your personal motivations for global health work.

- Motivation?
- Role, level of comfort?
- Family?
- Employer support? (protected time, financial support)

2. Involvement with local communities (in and out of the hospital setting).

3. Fund Raising: community partners, national enclaves.

4. Attend conferences and workshops.



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### Resources



<https://www.worldchildcancer.org/>



<https://www.cure4kids.org/>



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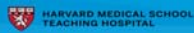
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### Final Thoughts



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# Thank You



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