Looking into the future of rheumatology: Challenges in sub-Saharan Africa

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Our task now is not fix the blame for the past but to fix the course for the future
References


- G M Mody and **G O Oyoo**. Practice of rheumatology in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities. East African Medical Journal 2007; 84:401-403


Africa is home for:

- 21 of the 30 poorest nations of the world
- 33 of the 41 most indebted nations
Challenges

- Resolution of political conflicts
- Large foreign debt repayments
- Lack of equitable trading opportunities
- Provision of basic services - water, sanitation, housing and basic health care
- Corruption and impunity
Challenges

- HIV pandemic
- Tuberculosis
- Malaria
Health priorities

- Malnutrition and starvation
- Water borne diseases - diarrhea, typhoid
- Infections – HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, parasitic diseases
- Chronic diseases - hypertension, epilepsy, mental illness, cardiac diseases
Resource constraints

- Human resources
- Finance
- Infrastructure
- Education
PRACTICE OF RHEUMATOLOGY IN AFRICA

- INADEQUATE RHEUMATOLOGISTS
- INADEQUATE FUNCTIONAL RHEUMATOLOGY CLINICS
- HAPHAZARD PATIENT MANAGEMENT
NO ORGANISED SERVICES-IN HOSPITALS AND IN THE COMMUNITY

VERY FEW SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE OR ALLOCATED TO PROVIDE SERVICES

MINIMAL RESOURCES FOR PATIENT DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT
Rheumatologists in Africa as recorded in the AFLAR Website

- ALGERIA-63 (400)
- BURKINA FASO-1
- CAMEROON-5
- CONGO BRAZZAVILE-2
- COTE D’VOIRE-1
- DR CONGO-2
- EGYPT-12
- ETHIOPIA-1
- GHANA-1
- KENYA-1 (7)
- LIBYA-2
- MADAGASCAR-2
- MALI-1
- MOURITANIA-1
- MOROCCO-26 (300)
- NIGERIA-3 (10)
- SENEGAL-3
- SOUTH AFRICA-3 (65)
- TUNISIA-10 (100)
- TOGO-1
- ZAMBIA-1

www.aflar.net
Countries offering rheumatology training

- Algeria
- Egypt
- Ivory coast
- ? Libya
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- South Africa
- Tunisia
Allied health professionals in rheumatology

- Programme for training Rheumatology nurses in Republic of South Africa (University of Cape town)
  - Initially two month, now in evolution to conform with regulations
- Largely an orphan area
RHEUMATOLOGY IN AFRICA

- INADEQUATE TEACHING AT UNIVERSITIES AND MEDICAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS
- CURRICULAR - NOT WELL DEVELOPED
- PERSONNEL NOT AVAILABLE
- TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES NOT AVAILABLE/ NOT ADEQUATE
RHEUMATOLOGY IN AFRICA

- NO EPIDEMIOLOGIC DATA ON RHEUMATIC DISEASES
- NO INTERVENTION STRATEGIES
- NO GUIDELINES ON PATIENT MANAGEMENT
- NEGLECTED IN RESEARCH AND TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT
RHEUMATOLOGY IN AFRICA

- DESPERATE AND OVERWHELMING NEED FOR INFORMATION ON RHEUMATIC DISEASES
- SCARCITY OF STUDIES AND/OR REPORTS ON RHEUMATIC DISEASES
RHEUMATIC DISEASES IN AFRICA: BURDEN OF DISEASE

- MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS AMONG THE TOP 10 MEDICAL CONDITIONS IN OUTPATIENT SETTING
- ACCOUNTS FOR 2-15% OF OUTPATIENT MORBIDITY
MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS ARE COMMON

DISEASE SPECTRA COULD BE SIMILAR TO THAT OBSERVED IN DEVELOPED WESTERN COUNTRIES
RHEUMATOLOGY IN AFRICA

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RHEUMATOLOGY IN AFRICA

- Need for hospital/population based studies
- Need for curricular development in medical training institutions
- Need for establishment of rheumatology clinics
- Need for training of more rheumatologists and increased resource allocation.
Let every person know, whether he wishes me well or ill, that I shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of rheumatology in Kenya.
“IF YOU WON’T BE BETTER TOMORROW THAN YOU WERE TODAY, THEN WHAT DO YOU NEED TOMORROW FOR?”
MAJOR CHALLENGES

- To obtain accurate information about the burden of the various rheumatic diseases
- Deficiency with respect to education and training of health professionals
- Deficiency with respect to provision of care for patients with rheumatic diseases
- Formulation of guidelines in resource poor setting
Challenges for Africa

- Human resources
- Access to diagnostics
- Availability of drugs
- Educating patients
- Initiation/supervision of treatment
HOPE for the future

- The presence of a core of enthusiastic and dedicated health professionals involved in the care of patients with musculoskeletal disorders
- Support from ILAR, EULAR, ACR
- Barriers to employment of health professionals from developing counties in the EU
HOPE for the future

- Electronic access to educational materials
- Training opportunities in Africa at a much lower cost
We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as unsolved problems
WHAT NEXT FOR AFRICA?

- Raise awareness of the impact of rheumatic diseases
- Training rheumatologists to serve all the major academic institutions in AFRICA
- Research into the prevalence and burden of rheumatic diseases
- Education of health professionals
WHAT NEXT FOR AFRICA?

- Policy formulation
- Community outreach programmes
- Development of management strategies
- Intersectoral collaboration with all key stakeholders
WHO: The bone and Joint decade

Objectives:

- To raise awareness on the growing burden of arthritis
- To improve quality of life of arthritis sufferers
- To support research on the cause and treatment of arthritis
- To promote cost-effective prevention and treatment of arthritis
- To educate doctors and health professionals about arthritis
“Do not follow a path that it may lead you to where others go, BUT Go where there is no path and leave a trail”
Welcome to the Global Expert Meeting in RA
BUDAPEST – 20th – 22nd March 2009
Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to stern resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind.

• Leonardo da Vinci
AFLAR: African League of Associations for Rheumatology

- Regional Rheumatology symposium and workshop:
  - July 14th and 16th 2016, Sarova, Mara, Kenya
- 9th AFLAR Congress, Accra, Ghana, September 2017
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Your past is not your potential.
In any hour you can choose to liberate the future.