

DEATH ROBS TWO STAUNCH ADVOCATES OF IMPROVING HEALTH THROUGH RESEARCH



Mr. A.K. Banya

In November 2010, EMBLEM established a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to secure the cooperation of key community leaders whose support would build trust in research and a bridge between research and public health. CAB members were individuals already respected in their community because of the positions they held or the stellar services they rendered to their community. Their responsibility was to act as dual advocates for the community in the research and for the research in the community. This narrow focus on childhood cancer by EMBLEM and the EMBLEM CAB was recently challenged by the sudden death from cardiovascular disease of



Dr. Vincent Owiny

two CAB members: Mr. A.K Banya, 80 years-at left, the founding Chairman of the EMBLEM CAB who passed in 2012 and Dr. Vincent Owiny, 56 years-at right, also a founding member of the CAB who passed in 2013.

The sudden death of two tireless advocates for children with cancer has focused the CAB and the community both on their work as well as on other health priorities looming threateningly in the community. Their deaths highlight how intertwined health is at all levels. Some put it lightly that “the hunter has suddenly become the hunted”. When EMBLEM established this CAB, it sought to increase the focus on an important childhood cancer. The loss of two CAB members, who previously did not know each other well and were not actively collaborating on health, firmly points to a looming epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) as a new focus. The problem of childhood cancer, especially lymphomas, is well known in Northern Uganda (Donato G et al. (2013)), but the problem of NCDs is less well known.

In his poems in the Song of Lawino, Okot Bitek, an anthropologist professor from northern Uganda, wrote “While the buffalo of poverty knocks the people down, ignorance stands there as an elephant”. EMBLEM pays tribute to its fallen CAB Members and hopes their tireless efforts against childhood cancer and their death from cardiovascular disease will direct focus on the elephant of ignorance that is common at the time of their death. Fare thee well. May God rest your souls in eternal peace.

Dr. Tobias Kinyera MBChB, MPH, Study Coordinator EMBLEM Uganda.

EMBLEM UGANDA

EMBLEM Uganda recruitment numbers stand at 440 (275 males, 165 females) screened and spotted and 227 (139 males, 88 females) eligible and enrolled.

EMBLEM Uganda held a joint CAB meet on the 17th of November 2013 to receive a status update about the study. The meeting was attended by Drs. Hildesheim and Mbulaiteye from NCI. On a sad note Dr. Vincent Owiny, CAB Member in charge of publicity, and District Health Officer for Oyam District, passed away on the 22nd of November 2013. He will be missed dearly.



Uganda Community Advisory Board

Dr Ronald Kawuma joins EMBLEM Uganda as a trainee in pathology. We welcome him to the EMBLEM team.

EMBLEM KENYA

EMBLEM Kenya has enrolled 96 cases (63 males, 33 females) since July 2012. This represents 24% of our case enrollment goal. The pathology diagnosis of the cases are being verified.

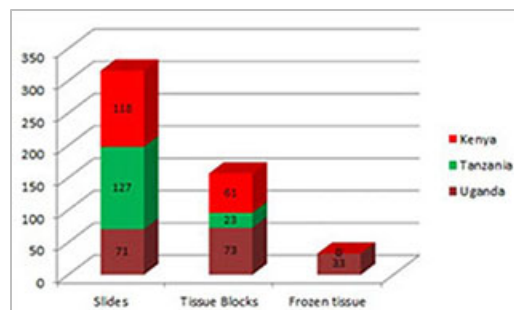
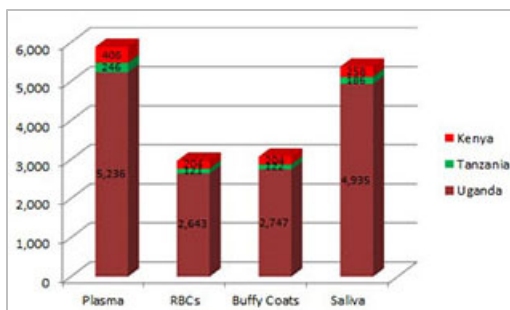
EMBLEM TANZANIA

By the end of 2013, 313 cases were spotted from whom 68 were eligible and 64 were enrolled (35 males, 39 females).

Sensitization sessions were held at Musoma Government Hospital and Tarime District Hospital. Posters and brochures were distributed at the hospital and at the office of the Regional Medical Officer, Dr. Samson Winani.

EMBLEM GOALS

To meet its scientific goals, EMBLEM calls for the collection, processing and storage of bio-specimens. The number of specimens collected and stored is



tracked using a custom-built Laboratory Inventory Management System (LIMS) and the cold chain is monitored and updated by automated freezer temperature chart recorders. The graphs show the cumulative sample inventory by material type for the three countries. During spring 2014, samples will be brought to the NCI to confirm their integrity and quality.

EMBLEM Newsletter is a monthly on-line publication based on contributions of the EMBLEM Study staff.

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