



EMBLEM Newsletter

A monthly means to inform and inspire our TEAM

November 2013

Vol. 4, No. 11

AORTIC 2013

Selected EMBLEM investigators joined more than 1000 scientists from 66 countries (including 32 of the 54 countries in Africa) in Durban, South Africa to participate in the ninth biannual meeting of the African Organization for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC) from November 21st to 24th, 2013. Held in the historic Albert Luthuli International Convention Center, the theme of the meeting was “Cancer in Africa: Bridging Science and Humanity”.

The meeting, one of the best organized by AORTIC, included plenary and workshop sessions with up to five concurrent sessions covering epidemiology, pathogenesis, molecular studies and innovative therapeutic strategies. The meeting had a strong emphasis on capacity building, including presentations from two cohorts of the BIG CAT grants from the National Cancer Institute.



EMBLEM Investigators at AORTIC

EMBLEM investigators participated in a well-attended one-day pre-conference workshop that focused on Burkitt Lymphoma research in East Africa. Speakers covered topics spanning from epidemiology, clinical outcomes and immunology studies of BL. In addition, plenary talks covered principles of cancer registration, capacity building, scientific publication, and collaborative research through a consortium.

Esther Kawira, Editor

EMBLEM UGANDA

Currently 440 potential cases have been spotted of whom 248 were eligible and 227 (139 males, 88 females) have been enrolled in Uganda. 1201 controls have been enrolled: 248 who are location-matched controls; 786 are healthy pilot population controls; and 167 mildly ill pilot controls. The collection of tissues for the BL Tumor Genome Sequencing Project, part of the EMBLEM collaboration with the NCI Office of Cancer Genomics, is almost complete with 38 of 40 samples already collected. Fresh-frozen tumor and matched normal samples from the first 34 cases were successfully shipped to NCI for further study.



EMBLEM frozen tumor and matched normal tissue being verified at NCI

EMBLEM KENYA

Currently 280 potential cases have been spotted of whom 113 were eligible and 100 have been enrolled (67 males, 33 females). EMBLEM completed arrangements with the Academic Model for Providing Health Care (AMPATH) central laboratory to process samples collected at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital and Webuye District Hospital. In addition, AMPATH will supervise in-country transport of samples from field laboratories, as well as, long-term storage of samples until they are shipped to the NCI.

EMBLEM TANZANIA

A total of 308 potential cases have been spotted, of whom 66 were eligible and 61 (34 males, 27 females) have been enrolled.

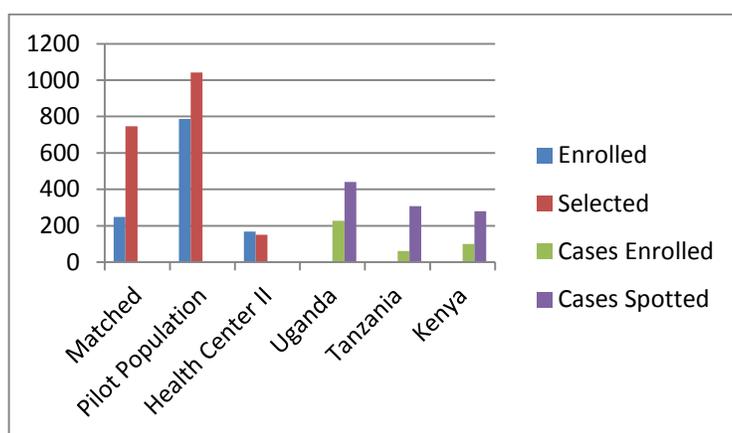
To strengthen its technical capacity, EMBLEM recruited a Senior Technical Supervisor, Mr. Colin Chao, to improve study coordination, communication, monitoring and control. Mr. Chao has a bachelor's degree in Biology from Duke and a master's degree in Physiology from George Washington University. He is passionate about International Health. We welcome him to EMBLEM and wish him well in his work.



Mr. Colin Chao – Team Leader, EMBLEM Tanzania

EMBLEM GOALS

Because EMBLEM is implemented in rural areas where capacity for high-quality research was previously weak, implementation of case and control enrollment was phased in gradually. The gradual process is evident in accumulated data, with most cases enrolled coming from Uganda (see graph below). The graph also shows that 100% of health center pilot controls, 75% of population pilot controls, and 33% of location-matched controls have been enrolled in Uganda. This success means that 2014 will see control enrollment introduced in Kenya and Tanzania, building on the successful experience in Uganda.



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

Editor- Dr. Esther Kawira elkawira@gmail.com

Reporters- EMBLEM Uganda – Esther Birungi; EMBLEM Kenya – Pam Akinyi Were, EMBLEM Tanzania – Josiah Magatti