Project for the development of a cancer prevention center in Nablus, (Palestine), organization of training and information activities in order to establish a league Palestinian fight against cancer

by

SAN CAMILLO-FORLANINI HOSPITAL IN ROME
SAN CAMILLO-FORLANINI FOUNDATION (for its excellence in health)
FORMED FOUNDATION (for training in the Mediterranean)
LILT (Italian League for the fight against cancer)
UNIMED (Mediterranean Universities Union)
An Najah University in Nablus in Palestine
Project for the development of a Italian-Palestina cancer prevention in Nablus with relative information and training activities

Introduction

In recent years, The World Health Organization has repeatedly drawn attention on increasing the life expectancy of populations in developing countries and particularly those of eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin.

Over the next few years with the aging of the population will change the incidence of diseases: infectious diseases will decrease, leading cause of infant mortality, and increase the vascular and neoplastic ones, leading causes of mortality in the elderly.

For the next year it is therefore expected an increase of the resident population in 21 countries that in 1970 was 285 million, in 2000 of 427 and in 2025 is expected to be 524 million. This increase will cover mainly developing countries of eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean that is Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

These countries have common traditions: religion, customs, diet and lifestyle, including the Mediterranean diet, which has always been a guarantee of good health and cancer prevention.

But in the twenty-first century, in the so-called global village, these practices will be softened by natural evolution and assimilation with those of the more affluent West or Continental Europe and the U.S.

Increasing prosperity will also mean an increase in pollution and environmental pollution in the cities leading to an increased cancer risk. This fact will add to other factors common oncogenes in these populations, resulting from the widespread use of tobacco and, despite the prohibitions, alcohol also.
Perspective

What was said above makes us thus assume that the neoplastic diseases that today in the countries of eastern and southern Mediterranean represent a marginal event, from 2020 will become a central issue for the health of these populations.

So among the tasks of the last decade, there is the start of a numbered concrete cancer prevention campaigns at the Government and the populations of these countries, the organization of structures diagnostic anticipation, the training of specialized personnel and the preparation of specific treatment and rehabilitation centers.

It is of great political, cultural and economic transactions that require progressive investments which make these countries self-sufficient and avoid a great painful migration towards the large health and already developed countries of Western Europe.

The Mediterranean Oncology Society (MOS) raised the alarm with a detailed epidemiological analysis on the spread of cancer in Mediterranean countries in 2009. The same applies for the European Cancer League (ECL) and the Arab Medical Association Against Cancer (AMAAAC) founded in 2001 with the participation of 17 Arab countries from Morocco to Syria, including the Palestinian Oncology Society (POS).

In these Arab countries it is starting an organization for the fight against cancer through the national or regional record-keeping and the creation of specialized facilities for the cure at universities.

In some of these countries, however, this perspective has not yet emerged from its infancy although there are signs of growing interest. Among these there is Palestine: in 2003 the university of Hebron organized a personnel two-week course of screening, prevention, diagnosis anticipation, epidemiology, and again in 2010 the same university, in collaboration with the An Najah University in Nablus, organized a workshop with British and American specialists in oncology, to promote the multidisciplinary approach to these diseases.

Epidemiology

That the neoplastic diseases in the Arab countries of the Mediterranean Basin are growing is evidenced by the data collected by the Mediterranean Oncology Society in 2009 on the basis of available data from some regional registries.

It should be pointed out that there are no data available for Palestine, but there are some relative to neighboring countries and regions including Israel.

It is evident that the incidence of tumors in different registers, is correlated with the progress of the social and health structure and the abundance of the living population in old age.
The figures relate to the incidence of 100,000 inhabitants.

In Egypt, the western region of the mouth of the Nile, Gharhiah Governorate (3,500,000 inhabitants), in 1999 there was an incidence of 156.1 for males and 119.3 for women.

In Lebanon, in 2003 the incidence was 169.3 for males and 176.8 for females.

In Libya, Benghazi region (about 1,500,000 inhabitants) in 2004 the register testifies 126.8 for males and 102.5 for females.

In Israel, for the Arab population estimated at about 20% of the state's population, in 2005 it was of 7,200,000 inhabitants, the incidence was much higher than that of 254.5 for males and 197 for females.

For comparison the data are even higher for the Jewish population of Israel: in 2005 they amounted to 283.9 for males and 269.4 for females; those of some southern Italian provinces (Naples, Salerno, Sassari, Ragusa) 2000/2003 – 276.3 for males and 214.1 for females; in the region of Montpellier - Herault in the south west of France, in 2001 they amounted to 414.8 even in males and 281.4 in women.

These comparisons would suggest that in the coming years in Arab countries, in parallel with the evolution of social welfare growth, industrialization and the increase in life expectancy, there will be a remarkable expansion of neoplastic diseases in many areas: they will be more than 50% over the current situation. And among these regions there will be Palestine.

As for the kind of neoplastic diseases of greater frequency, all available records of the Arab countries show great similarities with those in the West, giving a higher frequency in women with breast cancer and prostate in males that, while in both sexes there is a high frequency of colorectal cancer, lung and bladder. In Egypt there is also a high frequency of hepatocellular carcinoma associated with the apparently high rate of hepatitis B and C which are not reported in other registries. They also reported high frequencies of non-Hodgkin's lymphomas and leukemias.

Proposal

From the foregoing, a need and an opportunity to support the inevitable efforts in the field of oncology will incur the majority of Arab countries, first of all Palestine, as hospitals and universities themselves (Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah) are almost completely devoid of curative and preventive facilities including training.

The San Camillo Forlanini Hospital in Rome with its homonym Foundation, together with the Foundation Formed (training in the Mediterranean), the UNIMED (University of the Mediterranean Union), LILT (Italian League fight cancer) and the University of An Najah Nablus, have agreed on a common program to start in Nablus and possibly in other Palestinian cities:
1) A teaching training of medical personnel, technical and nursing staff in the field of oncology, with special emphasis on prevention, diagnosis and treatment anticipation;

2) A clinical activity to be developed through the creation of an outpatient center designed as a cancer preventive, diagnostic facilities for cancer of the breast, uterus, prostate, lung, liver, colon and melanoma skin;

3) A cultural activity to be carried out to inform the public through information material in the prevention of tumors to be printed and distributed in English and Arabic languages and the creation of a Palestinian league fight against cancer along the lines of the Italian one.

4) The Faculty of Medicine An-Najah University in Nablus was originally among the Faculties of Medicine in Palestine. It was created following the guidelines of the University of Bologna and currently has 22 teachers including Professors, researchers, and frequently hosts international experts. Currently there are 280 students in the six years of the course. This takes advantage from the availabilities of a teaching hospital.

Schedule

The Italo-Palestinian program of prevention and fight against cancer has been translated into a protocol that is being defined between the four structures Italian promoters and the University of Nablus local contact.

In particular, the Foundation Formed, stronger than a similar experience in Libya in the years 2004-2005, would provide training of Palestinian doctors and nurses, on-site and distance learning via the internet.

The San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital with the San Camillo-Forlanini Foundation will send a mission to Nablus: hospital medical and nursing staff to initiate and support the activities of the cancer prevention and counseling activities necessary for healing, as well as diagnostic instruments not available on site.

The Unimed would provide the co-ordination and secretariat, and to issue diplomas to the Palestinian participants in training courses.

The Italian league fight against cancer would provide to the creation of the League of Palestinian and provide the necessary material to the dissemination of a culture of prevention and the fight against tobacco smoke.

The University of Nablus will provide its assistance, identify and train personnel to be used in the prevention center and will make available its premises and equipment needed.
Estimated costs

Such a program may go to completion within two years and needs a predictable funding of 250,000 per year for a total of EUR 500,000 to be distributed in the various activities of the four participants and for the purchase or shipment and transportation of materials and equipment necessary.

Attachments

A first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding Italy-Palestine, under the high patronage of the Italian Foreign Ministry and the Palestinian Authority
A cost estimate for the two-year project
The agreement of the Libyan Italo Formed
Memorandum of Understanding for a training project and the creation of its cancer diagnostic and therapeutic center in Palestine under the auspices of the Italian Foreign Ministry and the Palestinian National Authority

Among the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital, the San Camillo-Forlanini Foundation, the Formed Foundation in partnership with Unimed, the Italian league fight against cancer and the University of An-Najah University Nablus (Palestine)

Noting the World Health Organization estimates about the expansion of neoplastic diseases in developing countries related to the increase in life expectancy, and also about the expectation that in the next 10 years, even in the listed countries, it will be the need for qualified prevention campaigns (see smoke, gynecological infections, hepatitis, etc.) and appropriate medical and nursing staff in accordance with the protocols in place in most industrialized countries, it is agreed as follows:

1

San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital together with Foundation leading the same name, The Formed Foundation, the Italian league fight against cancer and Unimed are available, through its media and its staff, to create a cancer center in Palestine; to carry out a specific training of Palestinian medical and nursing personnel through out the theory and practical cooperation on the patient, in order to create a team able to fulfill the need of the same Palestinian Autonomous Center. This availability also extends to the clinical healing at Palestinian hospitals and to the release of its certificates of study and training.

The expenditure for that Italian personnel, to be identified with a subsequent protocol, is borne by the Italian side with regard to teachers' professional fees, electronic transmission, printing of promotional material in Italian and English languages, and by An Najah University for travel, accommodation and meals of Italian personnel and printing and spread of material in Arabic language.

2

An Najah University will identify staff to be trained, provide a room for classes where there are more computers, build a medical clinic with two rooms for visits, an ultrasound machine, a colposcope, a microscope and an X-ray also elsewhere, with a mammography and a traditional X-ray unit; It will also provide to the accommodation and meals of Italian personnel; it will work to identify the
Palestinian medical staff whose training must be completed in Italy; Italy will provide to the accommodation and meals of Palestinian persons.

The parties agree that, in the first instance, the cancers to be treated will be those of the breast, uterus, liver and lung, colorectal and prostate, skin. Preventive action will be done through the creation and organization of a League for the Palestinian fight against cancer on the model of the Italian one.

As initial activity it should be practiced by Italian teachers not less than 10 lectures for groups of at least 5 Palestinian doctors of various specialities (surgeons, internists, radiologists, etc.) and 5 nurses Italo-Palestinians. The subsequent execution of at least 5 days of outpatient activity in Palestine in the fields of breast, gynecology, hepatology, pulmonology, urology, gastroenterology and dermatology in collaboration between Palestinian and Italian personnel, as well as the printing and distribution of brochures in English and Arabic languages on the theme of cancer prevention. The repetition of these stages should be at least once a month for six months.

The activity carried out later will be: seminars on the topics in question, namely breast, gynecology, hepatology, pulmonology, urology, coloproctology, dermatology, Italian outpatient counseling activity and Palestinian perform surgical operations in Palestinian hospitals.

The training of Palestinian doctors, identified for the management of this center, will be completed in Italy in Rome, at St. Camillo-Forlanini Hospital. The board and lodging of these doctors will be provided by St. Camillo-Forlanini Foundation whereas, the trips will be provided by the same doctors or whoever their.

This Agreement has a term of two years from January 1, 2010 and must be supplemented by further agreements. It will benefit of national and international funding and cooperation of other agencies and non-profit organization which are unanimously identified.