ISSN 2350-1049

International Journal of Recent Research in Interdisciplinary Sciences (IJRRIS)
Vol. 11, Issue 1, pp: (28-29), Month: January - March 2024, Available at: www.paperpublications.org

High Hepatocellular Carcinoma Rates in African Nations: Challenges and Possibilities

Sakarie Mustafe Hidig[1*]

Division of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery, Department of Surgery, The Fourth Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine, Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, China.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10799782

Published Date: 09-March-2024

Abstract: **Liver cancer is a significant public health concern globally, with particularly high rates observed in Africa. This Commentary highlights the challenges and Possibilities associated with liver cancer in African countries. Despite advancements in medical technology and healthcare services in other regions, Africa continues to bear a disproportionate burden of liver cancer cases. Contributing factors include high rates of viral hepatitis infections, particularly hepatitis B and C, as well as environmental factors such as aflatoxin exposure. Limited access to healthcare services, including screening and treatment options, further exacerbates the problem. This Commentary underscores the urgent need for comprehensive prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies tailored to the African context to mitigate the impact of liver cancer in the region. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of international collaboration, capacity building, and resource allocation to address this pressing public health issue in Africa.**

Keywords: **Liver Cancer, Treatment Strategies, Prevention, Diagnosis.**

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common type of liver cancer, poses a significant health burden globally. However, its impact is particularly pronounced in Africa, where a myriad of challenges intersect with limited resources, infrastructure, and healthcare systems. Understanding the unique challenges and opportunities in combating HCC in Africa is paramount for effective prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies[1]. One of the primary challenges in addressing HCC in Africa is the late diagnosis of the disease. Limited access to healthcare facilities, coupled with low awareness and education about liver cancer, often leads to patients presenting at advanced stages when treatment options are limited. Screening programs for HCC, such as regular liver function tests and ultrasound scans, are essential for early detection. However, in many African countries, such programs are either unavailable or inaccessible to a significant portion of the population due to financial constraints or geographic barriers. Africa faces a high prevalence of risk factors for HCC, including chronic hepatitis B and C infections, aflatoxin exposure, excessive alcohol consumption, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

Addressing these risk factors requires comprehensive public health interventions, which are often hindered by resource constraints and competing health priorities. Treatment options for HCC, such as surgery, liver transplantation, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy, are often limited or unavailable in many African countries[2]This scarcity of treatment facilities and expertise further exacerbates the burden of HCC and contributes to poor outcomes for patients. Vaccination against hepatitis B presents a significant opportunity for preventing HCC in Africa. Efforts to expand vaccination programs and increase awareness about the importance of vaccination can significantly reduce the incidence of hepatitis B-related liver cancer. Investing in healthcare infrastructure, including the development of cancer treatment centers, training healthcare professionals, and improving access to essential medicines and diagnostic tools, is crucial for improving HCC outcomes in Africa. Public health campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the risk factors for HCC and promoting healthy behaviors can empower individuals to take proactive steps to reduce their risk of developing liver cancer [3]

Targeted education programs can also improve early detection rates and encourage timely intervention. Encouraging research initiatives and fostering collaboration between African countries and international organizations can accelerate progress in understanding the epidemiology of HCC in Africa and developing tailored prevention and treatment strategies that are contextually relevant and sustainable[4]. Hepatocellular carcinoma poses a significant challenge to healthcare systems in Africa, but there are also ample opportunities for addressing this burden through prevention, early detection, and improved access to treatment[5]. By investing in preventive measures, strengthening healthcare infrastructure, and fostering collaboration, African countries can mitigate the impact of HCC and improve outcomes for patients across the continent. However, concerted efforts from governments, healthcare professionals, researchers, and civil society organizations are essential to realizing these opportunities and achieving meaningful progress in the fight against liver cancer in Africa

Conflict of interest: None

Ethics statement

The authors confirm that the research meets any required ethical guidelines, including adherence to the legal requirements of the study country.

Acknowledgment

Asst.Prof. Sakarie Mustafe Hidig has written the original draft. All authors have read and approved the submitted manuscript.

REFERENCES

[1] Nordien R, Sonderup MW, Spearman CW. A decade of hepatitis C at the University of Cape Town/Groote Schuur Hospital Liver Clinic, South Africa, in the pre-direct-acting antivirals era. S Afr Med J. 2020 Jan 29;110(2):106-111. doi: 10.7196/SAMJ.2020.v110i2.14208.

[2] Dakurah OB, Tamandjou CRT, Zunza M, Preiser W, Maponga TG. Viral hepatitis associated hepatocellular carcinoma on the African continent, the past, present, and future: a systematic review. BMC Cancer. 2021 Jun 19;21(1):715. doi: 10.1186/s12885-021-08426-y.

[3] Hidig, S. M., & Adan, M. M. (2024). Understanding the Incidence, Screening, and Burden of Cancer in Somalia: A Literature. GSJ, 12(1).

[4] Bray, F., Parkin, D. M., Gnangnon, F., Tshisimogo, G., Peko, J. F., Adoubi, I., ... & Chingonzoh, T. (2022). Cancer in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020: a review of current estimates of the national burden, data gaps, and future needs. The Lancet Oncology.

[5] Sakarie M Hidig .(2024) Advancing Healthcare in East Africa: Challenges, Advancements, and Potential Solutions.Vol.1, issue 1. GAS Journal of Clinical Medicine and Medical Research (GASJCMMR). Published by GAS Publishers