



# "The challenges of improving pathology diagnostics, education and oncologic research in Africa; which way forward?"

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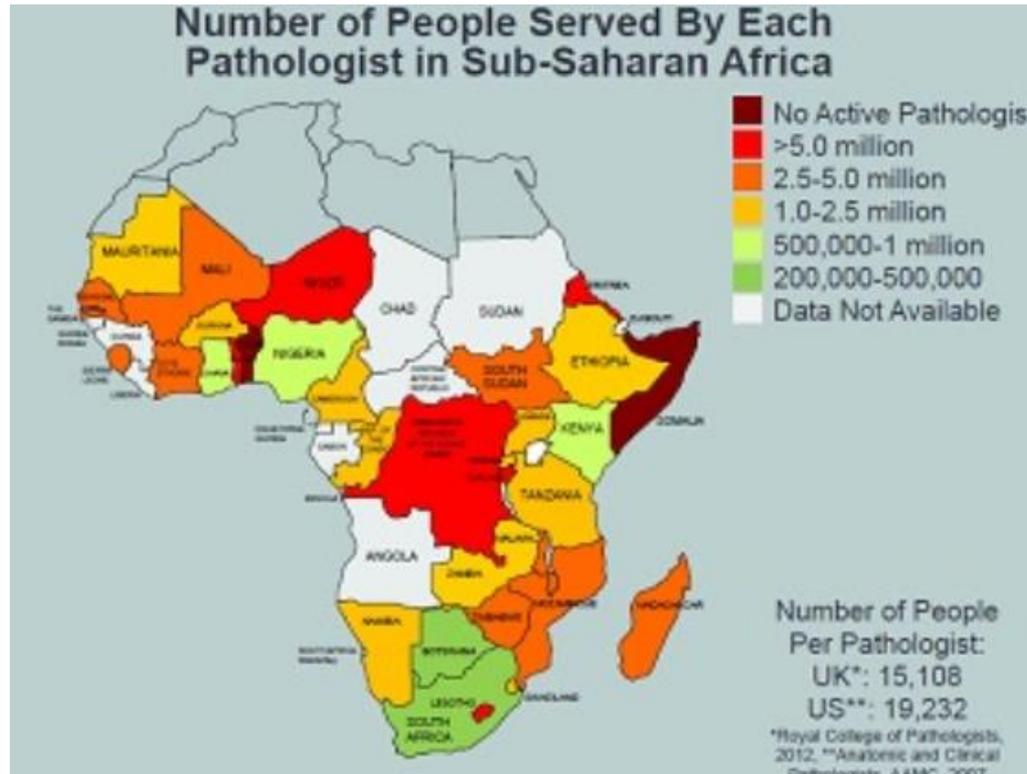
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## Which way forward in the face of:

- Lack of or inadequate infrastructure
- Inadequate personnel including both pathologists and technical personnel
  - Inadequacy of opportunities for professional education or training
  - Brain drain following many years of political military take over with mismanagement of the health care services
- Lack of or poor funding for simple things as reagents etc





- **African pathologist's summit in Dakar, Senegal in March 2013:**
- To what purpose?
  - To develop a framework that will allow African pathologists and international agencies and groups to effectively and comprehensively tackle issues affecting pathology in Africa.
- **Outcome of deliberations:**
  - Published in Archives of pathology and laboratory medicine
  - <http://www.archivesofpathology.org/doi/pdf/10.5858/arpa.2013-0732-CC>

# Proceedings of the African Pathologists Summit; March 22–23, 2013; Dakar, Senegal

## A Summary

*African Pathologists' Summit Working Groups*

**Conclusions.**—The significant lack of professional and technical personnel, inadequate infrastructure, limited training opportunities, poor funding of pathology services in Sub-Saharan Africa, and their significant impact on patient care were noted. The urgency of addressing these issues was recognized, and the recommendations that were made are contained in this report.

(*Arch Pathol Lab Med.* 2015;139:126–132; doi: 10.5858/arpa.2013-0732-CC)



- Issues that must be addressed immediately and sustained include:
  - Updating the knowledge base of practicing pathologists in a sustainable way
  - Enhance the quality of training of current pathology trainees and technical staff
  - Address the need for training in appropriate new technologies when relevant to the level of practice
- Address the need for continuous quality improvement and quality assurance
- Address the needs for advocacy to both private funding agencies (local and international) and government / ministries of health



- What is the role of stakeholders:
  - Many international stake holders largely European and American have vested interest in the success of African Health Care
  - We trust that their motivation is born out of altruism and that African success is truly their success as well



## How can the international stakeholders help?

- Provide support to African pathologists as they develop strategies for improving
  - Pathology diagnostic service including modalities for ensuring uniform standards across all regions
  - Regional educational training programs both in basic clinical knowledge and research techniques / methodology including knowledge transfer and application of newer technologies
  - Clinical and translational research that will produce appropriate information that is critical for policy making decisions



# URGENT issues for implementation

- Database development:
  - Some form of database to provide information on current status and on ongoing activities is critical
  - We must be able to measure our success or failure
- Current culture of working in silos must adapt to the reality of the need to encourage cooperation.



- Emphasis on education and training
- Define short term (immediate deliverables) and long term educational goals
- Pathology education will most likely yield early dividends in improved patient care and outcomes
- Long term dividends with development of local advocacy and improvement of infrastructure.
- The scope and the magnitude of the challenges are daunting
  - Barring “miracles”, results will be slow



- Please note:

**“This struggle is not for the faint hearted**

**We must be prepared for the long haul”**