

## Enhancing Cancer Care through Quality Initiatives: The Uganda Cancer Institute Experience with the Quality Oncology Practice Initiative

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### Abstract

Cancer care in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) faces numerous challenges, such as limited resources, infrastructure constraints, and a shortage of specialized training. To address these challenges, innovative Quality Improvement (QI) approaches are required. The Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI) by the ASCO provides a framework for improving care quality through evidence-based standards. This article explores how QOPI has been adapted to the local context of the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) and highlights the importance of aligning international best practices with local health care realities to bridge disparities in care standards. The adaptation of the QOPI program at UCI commenced with a collaborative meeting with the ASCO-QOPI team in 2020. A tailored implementation plan was developed focusing on incorporating ASCO's QOPI measures and additional metrics relevant to the Ugandan context, engaging multidisciplinary teams, and optimizing resource use by leveraging existing resources for data collection and analysis. The execution of the plan relied heavily on

staff training, participatory data collection, and continuous quality improvement processes that utilized data-driven methodologies. A retrospective analysis of QOPI data of UCI from 2020 to 2023 shows significant improvements in oncology care quality, highlighted by an upward trend in QOPI assessment scores across various metrics. These reflect the journey of UCI toward aligning its oncology care practices with international standards despite facing significant challenges. UCI's experience demonstrated the feasibility and impact of implementing international QI programs in LMICs. The success demonstrates that significant improvements in cancer care quality can be achieved in resource-constrained settings through adaptability, stakeholder engagement, and strategic resource optimization. UCI's journey is a model for other LMICs seeking to raise their cancer care standards, demonstrating that QI is necessary and attainable worldwide.

**Key words:** Cancer care, Oncology practice, Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)