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PACT Concludes Weeklong Mission on Cancer Control in Cambodia



Dr. Bidhu Mohanti, imPACT Mission expert in radiation oncology (centre), discusses planning for radiotherapy with staff at the Khmer Soviet Friendship Hospital in Phnom Penh. (Photo: IAEA/PACT)

As in many other low and middle-income countries, the number of people who contract cancer is rapidly increasing in Cambodia. To assess the country's needs and current cancer control capacity, the Cambodian Ministry of Health requested the IAEA to undertake a week-long Expert Mission.

From 3 to 7 June 2013, the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) organized and conducted an imPACT Mission. A team of international experts in the areas of cancer control planning, cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, cancer registration and palliative care was assembled and dispatched

to Cambodia. PACT's partners were involved in the planning and implementation of the imPACT Mission, notably the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office and the WHO Country Office for Cambodia. The WHO Representative in Cambodia, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy of Cambodia all played key roles in supporting the Mission.

"Cambodia faces many challenges in cancer control and planning," said Marion Piñeros Petersen, Cancer Control Specialist for IAEA/PACT and expert for the imPACT Mission to Cambodia. "Though much needs to be improved to care for cancer patients in Cambodia, the Mission Team met with many committed health professionals who are on the front lines of diagnosis and treatment."

During the Mission, the imPACT Review Team conducted site visits to major oncology centres, including the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital and Calmette Hospital, both of which are based in



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Phnom Penh. Additional visits were conducted to Siem Reap Provincial Hospital and the Sihanouk Hospital Center of Hope. During consultations, the Mission Team met several non-governmental organizations working in Cambodia to reduce cancer incidence and to strengthen cancer care and treatment. Meetings to discuss possible future collaborations in radiotherapy were also held with the World Bank and AusAID.

At the conclusion of the Mission, initial findings were presented to all relevant stakeholders, including Professor Eng Hout, the Secretary of State for Health. IAEA/PACT is now expected to deliver its report to the Ministry of Health. The report will contain a set of recommendations to improve the country's cancer control capacity and serve as a next step towards possible future collaboration with the PACT Programme Office, the WHO and partners.

Background

To help address the cancer challenges faced by its developing Member States, the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) offers an imPACT Review Mission. An imPACT Review Mission is a service provided by the IAEA and is conducted in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partner organizations. The Mission provides a country with a comprehensive assessment of its cancer control capacity and needs.

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