

Dr Deborah Bentley,  
Knowledge Exchange and Impact Officer,  
Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health,  
University of Manchester.

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Dear Dr Bentley,

### **Cancer in Africa**

I appreciate this opportunity to summarise work in which I am involved, the challenges faced, and the responses to those challenges.

I have, over the past two decades, been directly involved in humanitarian efforts in a number of countries but especially in Africa, and in particular Zambia, Rwanda, and more recently Kenya.

I became well aware of the incidence of deaths due to cancer, a global problem but particularly acute in the poorest countries where survival rates are very low and the disease strikes at relatively early ages. When the victims are women, the effect is even more devastating upon families and communities where women play a large economic and social role. The causes centre upon poverty in its various forms, and the inability of many to pay for treatment in countries where there is no free medical provision, coupled with the lack of awareness and of the lack of resources to diagnose and treat cancer.

I wanted to do something and at this point I should present my credentials. I am an economist by profession but was Honorary Chairman of a medical research charity for over 20 years (and remain an active trustee) and have contacts in that field; in addition I have experience of organising and managing charities, plus first-hand knowledge of Africa, and am in the fortunate position of being able to provide the necessary funding for my projects.

I had known and worked with Professor Ian Hampson and Dr Lynne Hampson for some time, and through them met Dr Orora Maranga of Nairobi. Everything fell into place. Between us we had the resources and skills to address these problems, and we share a passion to do what we can towards tackling them.

Two registered Charities have been established – Cancer Research Trust – Kenya (“CRT-K”), registered in Kenya, and Langdales Cancer Trust, registered in England.

Our work focused upon two inter-related areas.

Firstly, there was the desire to take forward research undertaken at the University of Manchester into the cervical cancer regressing potential of a drug, Lopinavir, used in other areas and which it was believed could be reformulated.

Secondly, there was the desire to provide treatment for women who could not afford to pay for themselves, coupled with provision of screening facilities and health education.

To get wheels in motion and establish the validity of Lopinavir for this new purpose, a preliminary trial was undertaken at Kenya's National Hospital, with full ethical approvals in place, and with extremely pleasing results. The women taking part were well looked after, over and above the norm for such trials. Further work was done, and a major article review was published in PLOS One by Hampson, Maranga, et al. The compound is now being taken further forward by Douglas Pharma with very promising prospects, and global potential to address and treat cervical cancer.

Facilities to provide treatment were also developed and driven forward by this team. The Lopinavir trial itself introduced new equipment and expertise to doctors in Nairobi. Over one thousand charity patients were treated in a few years. The poor now had access to the full recommended treatment. Diagnostic support was also made available with a team of volunteers going out to the people. Dietary and other health education material was produced and distributed.

The next step was to establish in Nairobi a specialty cancer hospital, the "Janice Cholerton Cancer Hospital" ("JCCH"). This has gradually extended its services and capacity and has become recognised as a centre of excellence. The number of charity patients treated now exceeds 2,400. "JCCH" is fully accredited, is registered with the national medical insurance scheme, and collaborates with other bodies and charities (including hosting a free medical camp), and with the Nairobi City Council.

An ambition of CRT-K/JCCH is to also fund medical bursaries.

The scale of the challenges faced in Africa is massive, but the work described here is, we believe, an important step in the right direction and demonstrates what can be achieved by a team which collectively has the resources necessary – scientific, financial and organisational, has the backing of colleagues, and shares the passion to see this work accomplished. There is no doubt that the research conducted by Ian and Lynne Hampson at the University of Manchester has played a crucial role in what has been achieved in Kenya to date.

I hope this brief summary is useful.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect in more detail, or to address other related issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ken Cholerton". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, horizontal stroke.

*Ken Cholerton*