Cancer has become a death sentence

Cancer should not be a death sentence, but in Yemen it has become one. This is the case for many Yemenis who cannot afford the cost of treatment, and who stay at home and wait for death to relieve their pain.

It has been one-and-a-half years since Safia was diagnosed with a tumour in her oral cavity. Safia, who is originally from Hajjah, now lives in Haradh, a district hosting many displaced Yemenis from surrounding conflict-affected areas. Since her diagnosis, Safia has had more than 10 chemotherapy sessions and 33 radiation therapy sessions. Her son Abdulla said that travelling from Haradh to Sana’a for treatment weakens his mother, and has left the family bankrupt.

WHO's response

This year, WHO supported the National Oncology Centre in Sana’a with various life-saving anti-cancer medicines and chemotherapy medications. These medications are enough to cover acute shortages of medicines for 30 000 cancer patients for one year.

Delivery of the mammography x-ray machine to Al Jumhoori hospital in Sana'a, that is used to detect breast cancerMoreover, WHO has delivered 2 mammography x-ray machines to Al Jumhoori hospital in Sana’a and Al Sadakah hospital in Aden. Mammography is a special X-ray machine for breast imaging, and is used to detect breast cancer early before women have any signs of disease. Mammograms can be also done for those women experiencing symptoms. Regular mammograms ensure early diagnosis of breast cancer and help achieve high rates of treatment and reduce the number of deaths from this type of cancer.

“Noncommunicable diseases account for 57% of all deaths in Yemen. And cancer affects all age groups in the country, over 60% of whom are aged 30-69 years old — during the prime of these people’s lives. Cancer prevention is key, and WHO, UNICEF, along with local health authorities and partners are working to ensure that prevention is prioritized, allowing us to respond to this “hidden cost of war,” said Altaf Musani, WHO Representative in Yemen.

The delivery of these life-saving health supplies is a result of the generous support of the World Bank, USAID/OFDA, KSRelief, UAE Aid, ECHO, Canada, Korea, Japan, Germany and Kuwait.

Saturday 13th of July 2024 10:43:17 AM