

We all know that cancer is a major medical condition that millions of individuals are afflicted by it throughout the world. No cure is found for it yet and the diagnostic tools currently available to detect cancer at an early stage are not considered to be as sensitive and specific to meet the requirement in the clinics. However, for some cancers there are treatments available in major industrial countries but not available in the developing countries with low to medium income range. Indeed why the developing countries are not investing more in prevention and early diagnosis methods? Obviously if health officials and the public are educated to focus on prevention of cancer and early detection of cancer, the burden of cancer would be much lower for any population in the near and long term. In fact for some countries (including Iran) it is predicted cancer incidence to be on the rise which could reach its climax by year 2025.

The gap between the rich and poor countries is a well established fact and international organizations such as IMF, world bank,... have been established to help the economies of such developing countries which may take many decades depending on a given country. However, what is urgently needed for many of these low- to medium income level countries is an assistance in education and research programs, enabling these countries to defend their populations against cancer. In the most recent issue of Science<sup>\*</sup>, some numbers on the gap between the rich and poor countries are given that are shocking, for example: "A child suffering from leukemia in Western Europe has an 85% chance of survival; in the 25 poorest countries in the world, it's just over 10%. For a man with testicular cancer, the numbers are about 95% and just over 40%. Estimates suggest that less than 5% of the world's cancer resources are spent in the developing world".

These data suggest that the developing world should pay more attention to the problem of cancer, especially in the areas of prevention and diagnosis and establish organizations that can effectively work with the developed countries in order to transfer their experiences in fighting cancer. Hopefully the Iranian ministry of health would spend more resources for fighting cancer in the coming years simply because all data suggest that cancer will be the number one killing disease in Iran in the near future if mechanisms are not found to stop its spread due to both life-style changes and environmental pollutants that are considered among the major contributors to cause cancer.

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\* Martin Enserink. Science, Vol. 331, 1548-1550, 2011.