

# The Challenge of the Cancer Epidemic in Low- and Middle-Income Countries:

Social and Financial Implications on the Ground

**Akiko IDA PhD,**

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Human and Social Sciences, **Shimane University**

Research Fellow, **JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute** for Peace & Development



Akiko IDA

# By 2030, $\frac{3}{4}$ of cancer deaths will occur in LMICs

## Background:

- Cancer-related infections, population growth, aging, unhealthy lifestyles, pollution, and lack of access to cancer care.

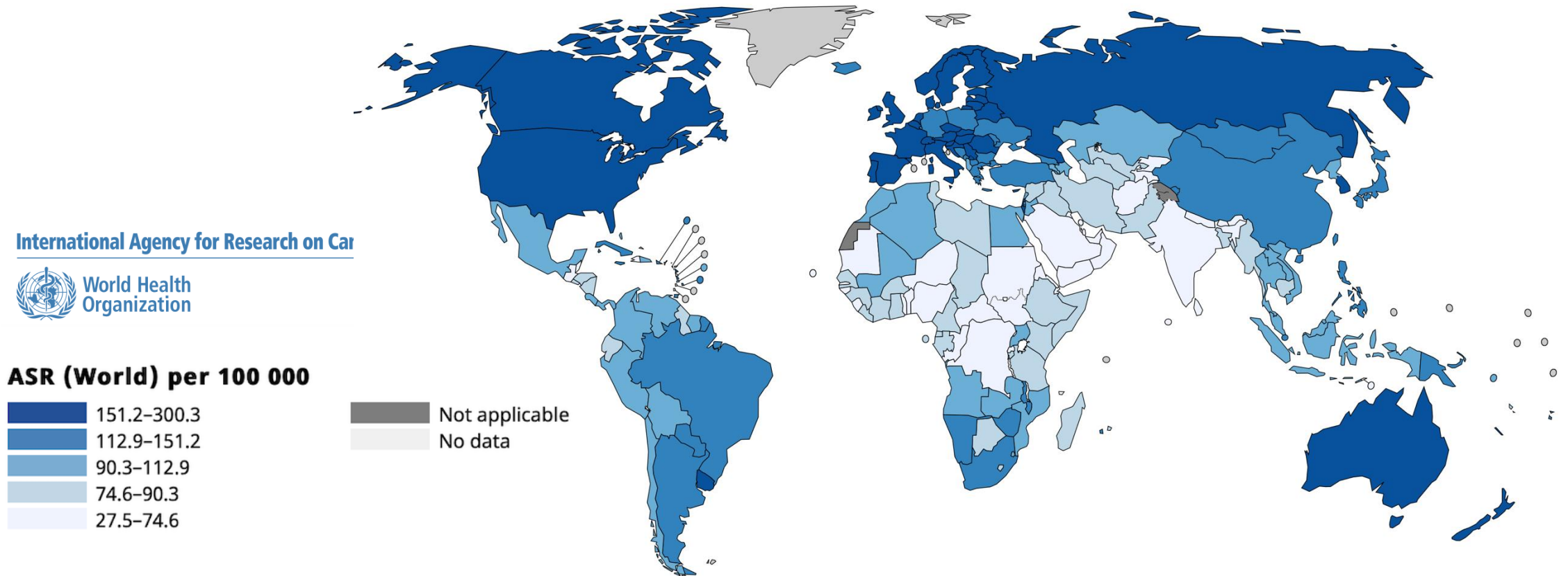
## But

- Technological progress has not benefitted people in LMICs.
- Cancer-related research concentrates in rich countries.
- Late diagnosis is leading to high mortality.
- The financial burden is also rising.



# Cancer incidence under 65 is rising in LMICs

**Age-Standardized Rate (World) per 100 000, Incidence, Both sexes, age [0-64], in 2022**  
All cancers



Asia + Africa +  
Latin Americas =

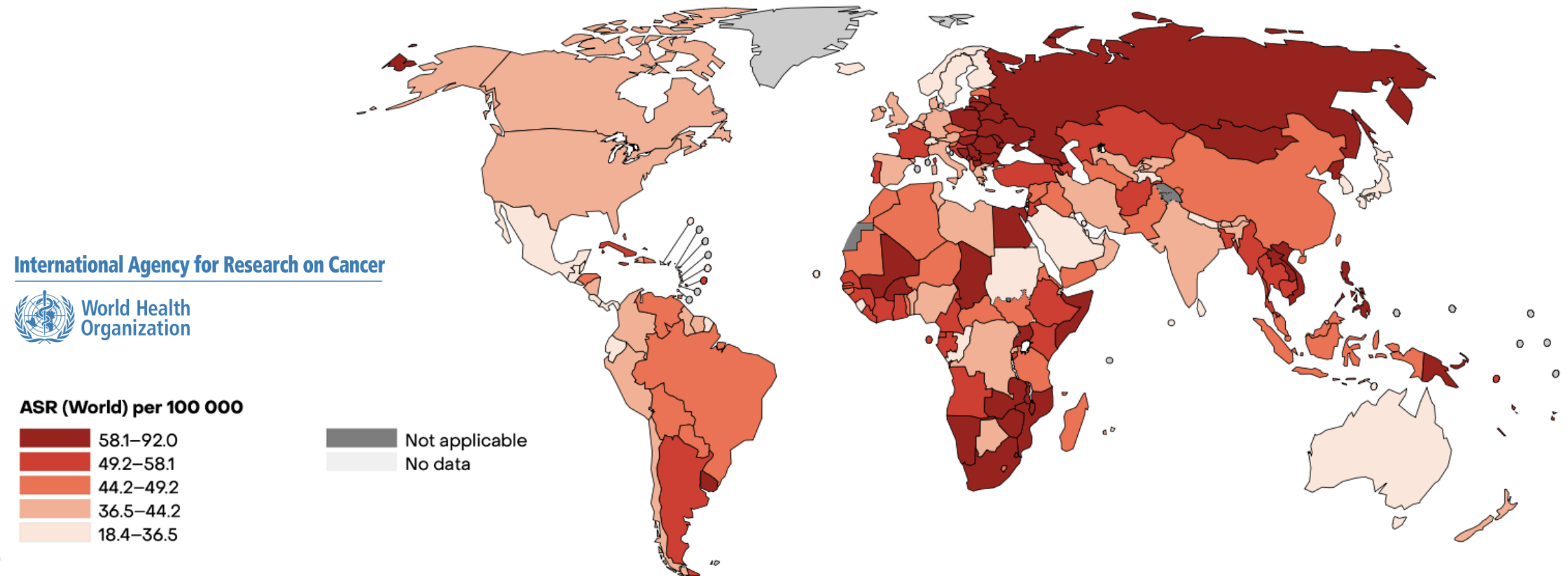
**72%** of world  
cancer  
incidence





# High mortality rates under 65 in LMICs

Age-Standardized Rate (World) per 100 000, Mortality, Both sexes, age [0-64], in 2022  
All cancers



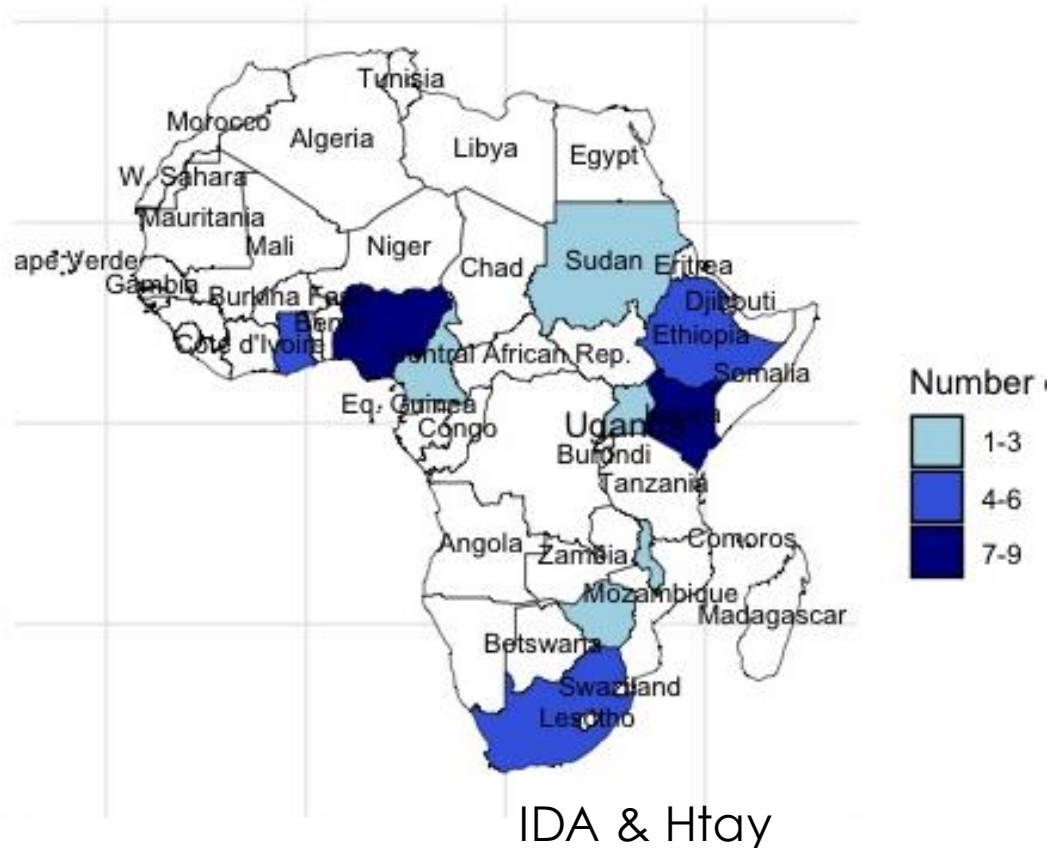
# Our research

- “Financial Toxicity of Cancer Care in sub-Saharan Africa: A **Systematic Review**”
- “Constraining and Facilitating Factors of **Access to Cancer Care for Children** in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso” (**Qualitative Research**)



# Financial Burden of Cancer Care in sub-Saharan Africa

Number of Studies in African Countries



- Existing studies concentrate on **five** upper-middle and high-income countries.
- 86-95%** of households experience **Catastrophic Health Expenditures** (Knapp et al., 2022).
- People often **pay out of pocket** for treatment, transport and other expenses (**USD 57-5,306.9**) (Chagaluka et al., 2021; Mustapha et al., 2020).

# Financial burden leads to adverse consequences

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- Loss of **income and assets**
- Low **quality of life** for the household
- Less access to treatment and **less optimistic prognosis**
- **Worry**, fear of death, low self-esteem
- Loss of spouse, **family breakdown**
- Less participation in **social activities**



Lynsey Addario/Getty Images



# Social vulnerability exacerbates the burden

Low-income households

Large households

Patients who live in rural areas

Patients with disabilities and those in advanced stages

Patients and families with physically demanding jobs



George W. Bush Presidential Center

# Testimony

A father of a 3-year-old boy with cancer in Burkina Faso:

“I am a displaced. I even don't have a place to sleep in Ouagadougou. A doctor asked me if I had money, and I said no. Then she gave me a ride to another hospital herself.”

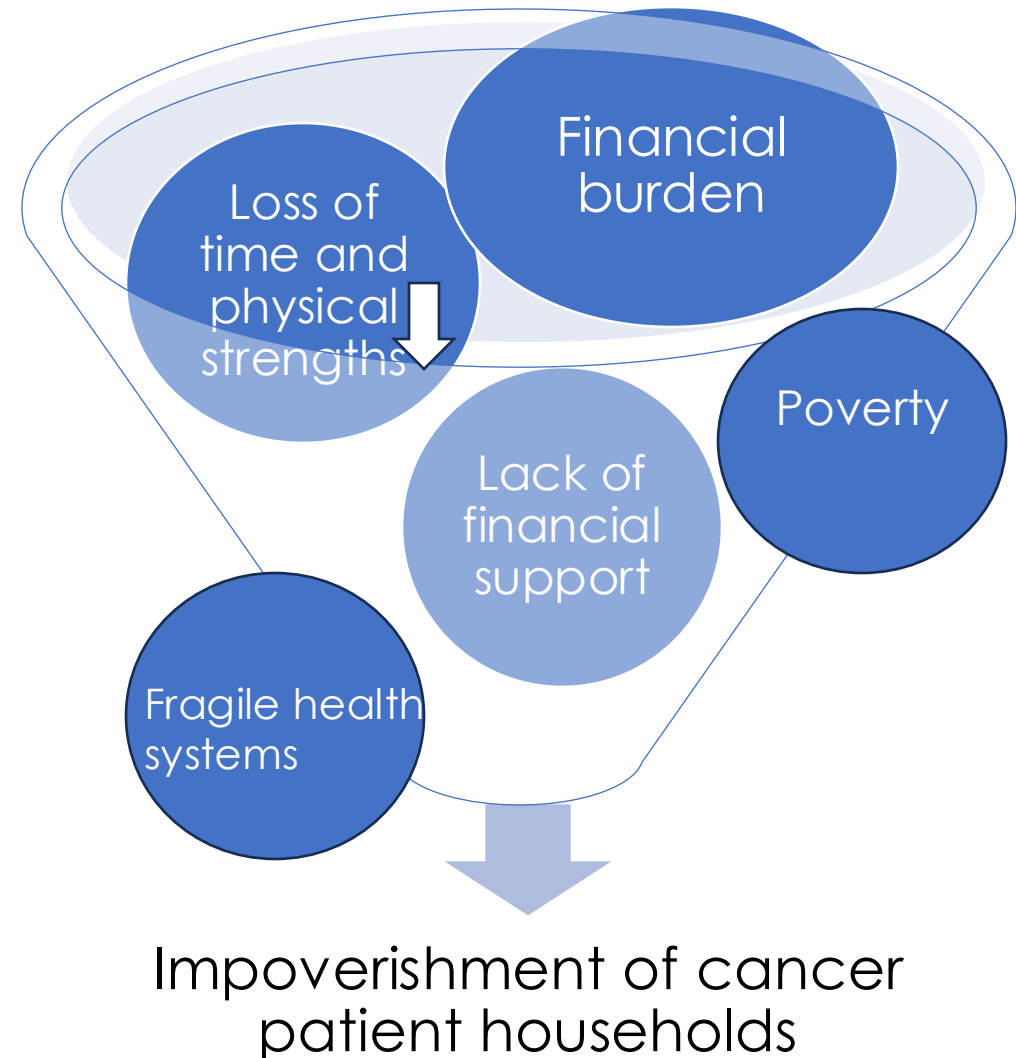
He borrowed money from his friends and took his son to five different hospitals in vain.



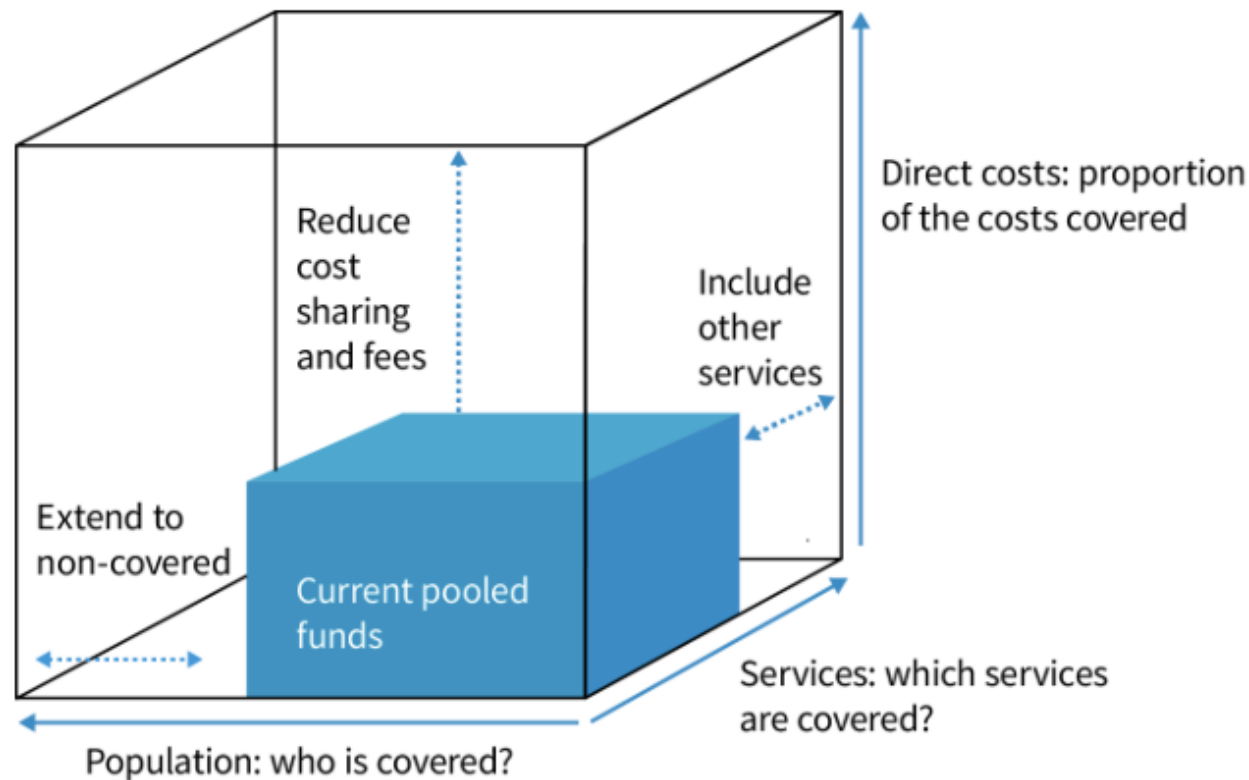
# Cancer brings a vicious circle to Africa

In Africa,

- 40% live under the **poverty line**.
- 60% are engaged in **agriculture**.
- **Health systems** are fragmented and not fully functioning.
- Cancer requires **treatment in the long term**.
- **External assistance** and health **insurance** are not sufficient.
- Africa accounts for **23% of global cervical cancer mortality**. Women often suffer from **disabilities**.



# Cancer care should be part of **Universal Health Coverage** efforts



**The UHC Cube**

Source: WHO



# Take Away Messages



A woman sharing her bed with another patient (Dar es Salaam)/Katrina Manson

- The cancer crisis in LMICs is leading to increased **mortality, poverty, and inequalities.**

## Recommendations:

- Inclusion of cancer in **UHC efforts**
- Financial mechanism to **deliver essential care** and to **protect** cancer patients
- Strengthening of **health systems**
- **Listening to the voices** of patients and families
- More **research** in low-income countries

# Thank you for your attention



[Ida@soc.Shimane-u.ac.jp](mailto:Ida@soc.Shimane-u.ac.jp)