

CHALLENGES OF  
SETTING UP AN  
ORTHOPAEDIC  
ONCOLOGY  
SERVICE IN LOW  
AND MIDDLE  
INCOME  
COUNTRIES

Factors & Solutions

# FALLS INTO THE CONTEXT OF A GLOBAL SURGICAL CRISIS

GLOBAL VIEWS | GLOBAL HEALTH

## Opinion: Africa's surgery crisis is a priority for the new WHO director

By expanding access to surgical care, the new World Health Organization director for Africa has an opportunity to create a more equitable global health landscape.

By *Dr. Nicholas Okumu* // 18 September 2024



SEARCH FOR ARTICLES

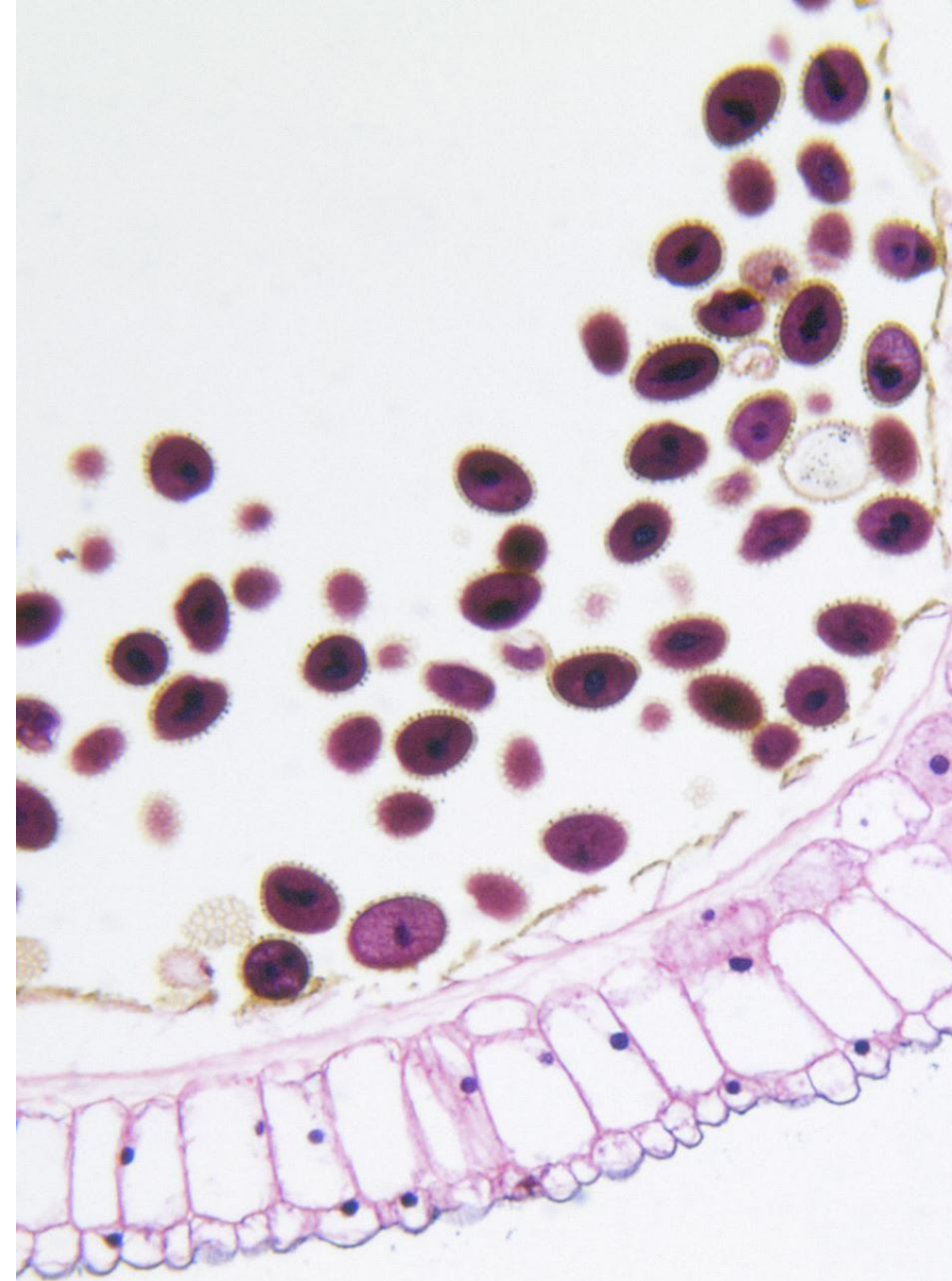


### Role of Surgeons in Oncology

- 80-90% of cancer cases involve a surgeon.
- **Solid Tumors:** Surgery is essential for diagnosis, staging, curative treatment, or palliation.
- **Multidisciplinary Approach:** Surgeons collaborate with medical and radiation oncologists to provide comprehensive care.
- **Curative and Palliative Care:** Surgery is crucial in both early-stage treatment and symptom management in advanced cases.

# OVERVIEW OF ORTHOPAEDIC ONCOLOGY

- **Definition:** Study, diagnosis, and treatment of musculoskeletal tumors.
- **Tumor Types:** Benign (osteochondroma, enchondroma), Malignant (osteosarcoma, Ewing's sarcoma).
- **Key Treatments:** Surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy.



IMPORTANCE  
IN THE  
HEALTHCARE  
SYSTEM



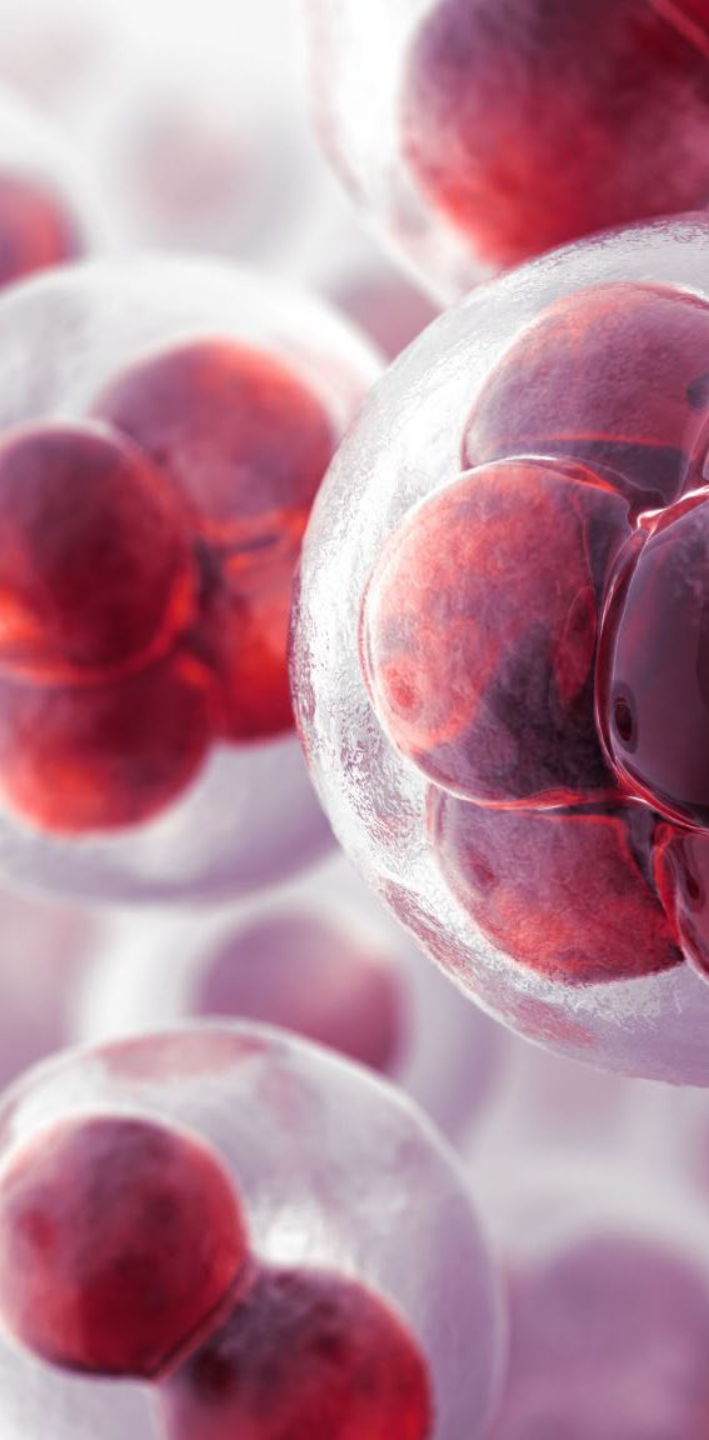
**Early Diagnosis:** Reduces Morbidity and Improves Survival Rates



**Economic Impact:** Timely treatment reduces costs.



**Quality of Life:** Focus on limb function and psychosocial well-being.



## IMPORTANCE IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- **Research and Advancements:** The field provides a vast area for research, from understanding tumour genetics to developing new treatment modalities, thereby further enhancing healthcare outcomes

## THE NEED FOR SPECIALIZED SERVICES IN LMICS

- Basically boils down to 1 thing: our survival (15%) and limb salvage rates (5%) are too low - (Ezzi & Okumu - 2024)
- 70% and 95% in the Global North
- Sarcoma treatment around the world is modelled around the treatment of patients in focused centers using a multidisciplinary approach - Model has proved successful



CHALLENGES THAT WE FACE IN  
KENYA AND OTHER LMIC



# INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

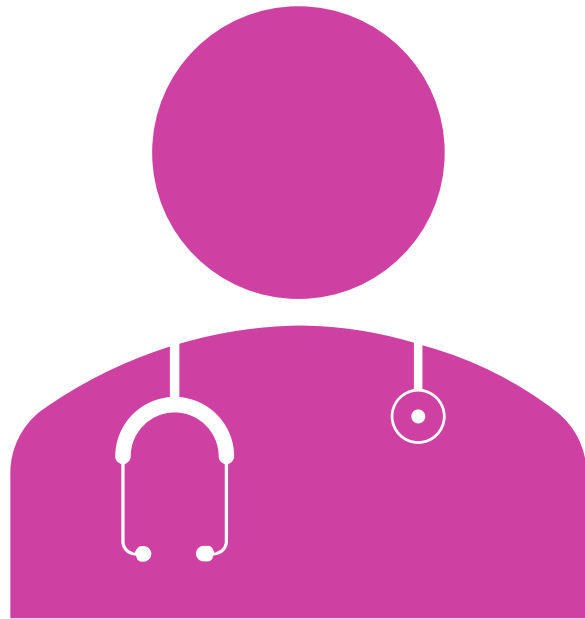
- **Lack of Diagnostic Facilities:** Limited access to advanced imaging tools (MRI, PET scans) delays diagnosis.
- **Long Travel for Diagnosis:** Patients in rural areas often travel long distances, increasing costs and delays.
- **Limited Surgical Theatres:** Specialized equipment for orthopaedic oncology surgeries is scarce, affecting treatment options.



# HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES

- **Shortage of Specialists:** Few orthopaedic oncologists, pathologists, and radiation oncologists are available in LMICs.
- **Brain Drain:** Trained professionals often leave for better opportunities abroad.
- **Overburdened Healthcare Workers:** Existing professionals face heavy workloads, which compromises patient care and prolongs treatment timelines.





## COST AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

- **High Costs of Treatment:** Diagnostic imaging, surgical procedures, and rehabilitation are expensive, often unaffordable for many patients.
- **Out-of-Pocket Expenses:** Most patients bear the financial burden due to limited health insurance coverage.
- **Limited Funding:** Healthcare budgets are often directed to infectious diseases, leaving little for orthopaedic oncology.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **International Collaboration:** Capacity-building and resource-sharing.
- **Telemedicine:** Enhances access to specialists.
- **Innovation:** use of AI and other tools
- **Local Manufacturing:** Reducing costs of prosthetics and drugs.



## KEY SOLUTIONS

- **Specialized Training:** Partnerships for knowledge transfer.
- **Health Financing:** Reforms to include orthopaedic oncology.
- **Public Awareness:** Education campaigns to counter cultural beliefs.
- **Policy:** Referral Needs to be More Direct

# SUSTAINABLE AND CREATIVE FINANCING OPTIONS ARE NEEDED - KENYA SARCOMA FOUNDATION



## Global Issues

Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues That Affect Us All

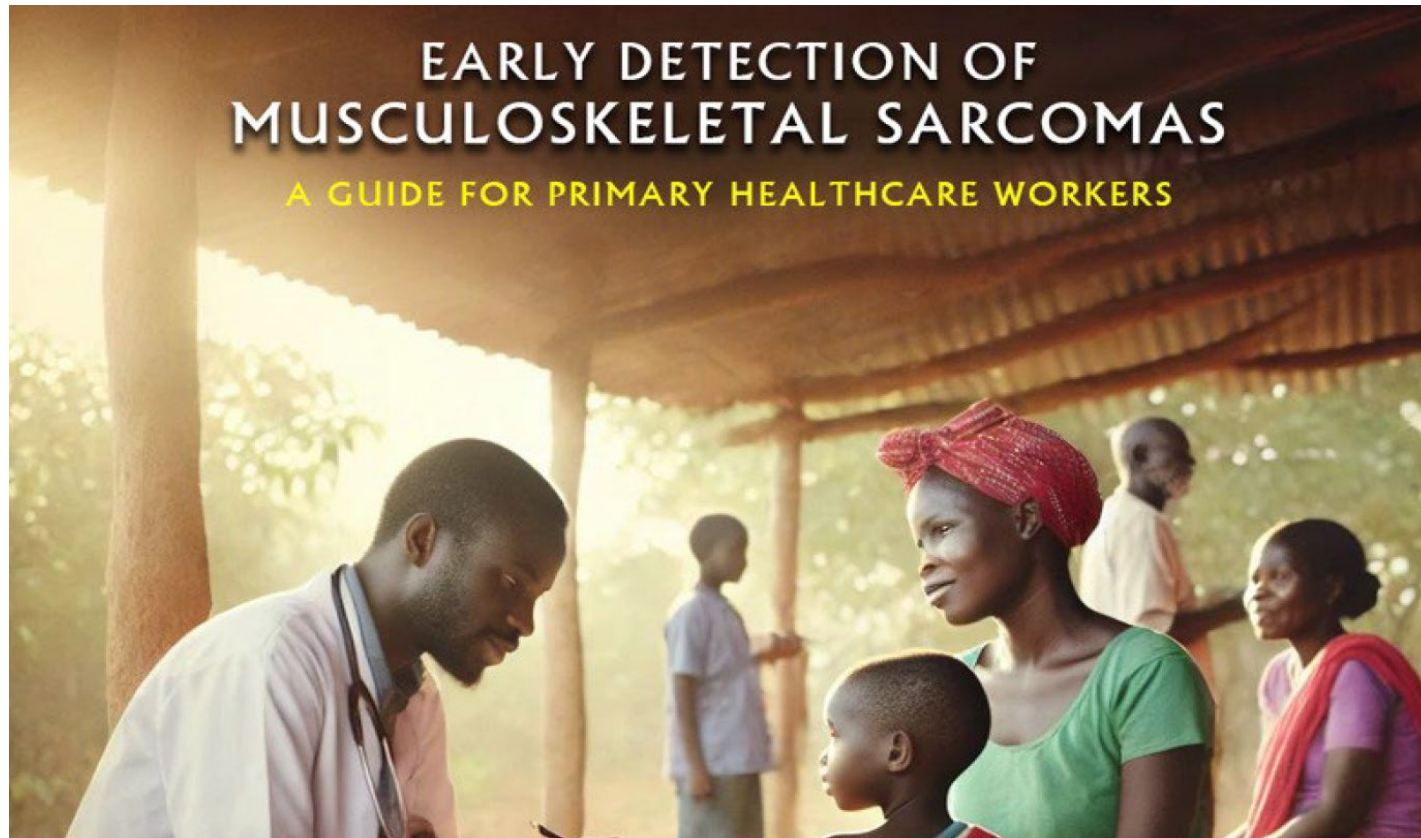
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## Endowment Funds Can Revolutionise Sarcoma Care in Developing Countries



# AWARENESS - FOR GENERAL PUBLIC AND PRIMARY HEALTHCARE WORKERS





## CONCLUSION

**Call for Action:** Collaboration and innovation are key to improving orthopaedic oncology services in LMICs.