

## Special Supplement: Global Neuro-Oncology

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In this special supplement of the Journal of Pakistan Medical Association, titled "Global Neuro-Oncology (GNO)," we expand upon the Pakistan Brain Tumour Epidemiological Study's (PBTES) foundational work.<sup>1</sup> This edition is dedicated to addressing the critical challenges in global neuro-oncology, with roots in global oncology and global surgery, as emphasized in leading publications like *The Lancet*.<sup>2</sup> It highlights the urgency of tackling brain tumours, the 10th leading cause of mortality worldwide, with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) where healthcare disparities are most acute.

Our supplement enriches the dialogue initiated by the PBTES, providing a comprehensive epidemiological framework that deepens our understanding of brain tumour patterns in Pakistan. We go beyond these insights by including a series of opinion articles and 15 guideline papers that resonate with the broader issues in global oncology. These contributions not only echo the challenges discussed in leading global surgery platforms but also bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical healthcare implementation in LMICs.

The opinion pieces offer multifaceted perspectives on clinical, socioeconomic, and infrastructural challenges in LMICs. They serve as a conduit between the PBTES's data-driven insights and the on-ground realities of implementing effective neuro-oncology practices in resource-constrained settings.

The heart of this supplement is the guideline papers. These guidelines translate the PBTES's epidemiological data into actionable strategies for brain tumour management. They emphasize equity and accessibility in healthcare, mirroring global oncology and global surgery discussions, and provide a roadmap for overcoming barriers in neuro-oncological care, focussing on scalable and sustainable solutions. These guidelines form part of a larger narrative in global health, addressing disparities in care and outcomes and offering a holistic approach to neuro-oncology that considers the diverse needs of LMICs.

These opinion and guideline papers, informed by

comprehensive research, advocate for a holistic approach to brain tumour management that spans early detection to long-term support. They emphasize equitable access to quality care, addressing a significant challenge in global health.

The strength and credibility of these guideline papers are notably enhanced by the endorsement from members of the "Pakistan Brain Tumour Consortium (PBTC)." A group of expert panel lists from the PBTC rigorously discussed and vetted each guideline. Every aspect, including the pros and cons, was meticulously examined to achieve a consensus. This collaborative process ensures that the guidelines are not only deeply informed but also broadly representative of the field's current best practices.

Additionally, this GNO supplement paves the way for the imminent release of "Comprehensive Health Systems Policy Recommendations for the Management of Brain Tumours in LMICs." These recommendations, drawing from the latest research and clinical insights specific to brain tumour management in LMICs, aim to coalesce into a strategy that is acutely attuned to the distinct challenges faced in these regions. By integrating cutting-edge knowledge with a deep understanding of local contexts, the recommendations promise to deliver nuanced, practical approaches that effectively address the unique healthcare landscapes of LMICs.

These upcoming recommendations, currently under development, are pivotal. They acknowledge LMICs' resource and infrastructure limitations, bridging the gap between research and practical application. This ensures that the guidelines are evidence-based, realistic, and implementable in diverse settings. They also embody a collaborative spirit, drawing on expertise from various neuro-oncology, research, and healthcare backgrounds, crucial for inclusivity and reflecting diverse experiences and needs within LMICs.

This GNO supplement is more than a scholarly collection; it's a call to action for the global medical community to address neuro-oncology challenges in LMICs. Inspired by the PBTES, which was accomplished successfully due in large part to the involvement of the PBTC, and informed by ongoing global health discourse, it fosters a more

equitable and effective approach to brain tumour management worldwide. The PBTC's role is pivotal, reflecting a collaborative spirit that draws on diverse expertise in neuro-oncology, research, and healthcare. Their involvement in developing and endorsing the guidelines reinforces our message, ensuring that our approach is inclusive, evidence-based, and reflective of diverse experiences and needs within LMICs.

We acknowledge the evolving nature of brain tumour management and socioeconomic changes in LMICs. Thus, we commit to regularly updating our guidelines to align with the latest global knowledge and adapt treatments to local conditions without compromising standards. The PBTC's ongoing involvement in this process is crucial, as their expertise and insights will continue to inform and refine our strategies. This ensures that our supplement remains dynamic and responsive to the changing landscape of global neuro-oncology, ultimately leading to

better outcomes for brain tumour patients across LMICs.

In conclusion, this supplement, a collaborative effort with the PBTC, builds upon the PBTES research and aligns with broader global oncology and surgery goals. Our combined efforts aim to inform, inspire action, and improve outcomes for brain tumour patients across LMICs, showcasing the power of partnership in addressing complex health challenges.

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### References

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