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Clinical Trials in Cardio-Oncology Fellowship

Abstract

It has been recently established that the burden of cardiovascular comorbidities at initial cancer diagnosis was very high among Malaysian (breast) cancer patients, irrespective of age. This, coupled with administration of potentially cardiotoxic adjuvant therapies appeared to put a majority of them at high risk of developing cardiotoxicities. These findings not only highlight the urgent need for development of cardio-oncology services in Malaysia, but also the need for focussed research to reduce cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in Malaysian cancer survivors. Notably, training in cardio-oncology trials will allow planning of 'methodologically sound' trials to identify innovative and cost-effective interventions in cancer survivors including lifestyle interventions and novel cardioprotective therapies that is expected to improve cardiovascular outcomes and overall survival in Malaysian cancer patients.

I will be participating in a Clinical Trial in Cardio-Oncology Fellowship in The Paris-East Clinical Investigation Center (CIC Paris-Est) of INSERM (French National Institute of Health and Medical Research). During the one-month fellowship, I will be exposed to the principles of clinical trials in the field of cardiology, oncology, and cardio-metabolism research, and also the principles of pharmacovigilance. The fellowship will also familiarise me with the use of the international pharmacovigilance database, VigiBase. Combining my own expertise in cancer survivorship in low and middle-income settings with the expertise of my host supervisor, we will conceive the idea for a cardio-oncology trial that is both pragmatic (i.e. resource sensitive), and will address the needs of the cancer survivors in Malaysian (Asian) settings. A 'skeleton proposal' will be drafted and together with my supervisor, potential funding agencies will also be identified.

Following my return to Malaysia, a full proposal of the trial will be written in collaboration with local stakeholders in Malaysia including colleagues from oncology, cardiology, surgery, primary care and public health disciplines as well as members of local civil societies. Following completion of the research proposal for the cardio-oncology trial in Malaysia, we (including my host supervisor) will be applying for extramural funds to conduct the clinical trial.