

## HUMAN RESOURCES FOR TREATING NEW CANCER CASES IN GEORGIA

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to describe the human resources needed in Georgia to treat new cancer patients. The population of Georgia is approximately 4.3 million (2.03 million men and 2.28 million women) and the estimated number of new cancer cases in Georgia for the year 2012, based on GLOBOCAN data (<http://globocan.iarc.fr/>) for Georgia as a whole was 12361 (6235 in men and 6126 in women) (Table A).

The five most common cancers in Georgia are (1) breast, (2) urological (bladder, kidney, prostate and testis), (3) lung, (4) gynecological (cervix uteri, corpus uteri and ovary) and (5) head and neck (lip, oral cavity, nasopharynx, other pharynx, larynx and thyroid).

Table A: The ten most frequently occurring cancers in Georgia for men and women based on 2012 GLOBOCAN data.

Cancer	BOTH SEXES		MEN		WOMEN	
	Incidence	Rank	Incidence	Rank	Incidence	Rank
All cancers excl. non-melanoma skin cancer	12361		6235		6126	
Breast	1541	1			1541	1
Urological	1150	2	1054	1	96	10
Lung	1129	3	931	2	198	6
Gynecological	985	4			985	2
Head and Neck	869	5	701	3	168	9
Stomach	711	6	406	4	305	4
Brain, nervous system	610	7	287	6	323	3
Colorectal	605	8	305	5	300	5
Hematological	466	9	273	7	193	7

Liver	439	10	250	8	189	8
Pancreas	182	11	99	9	83	11
Melanoma of skin	105	12	61	10	44	12
Esophagus	48	13	33	11	15	14
Gallbladder	35	14	19	12	16	13
Kaposi sarcoma	0	15	0	13	0	15

Newly diagnosed cancer patients need pathology, surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. The number of oncologists needed is based, therefore, on the number of patients requiring pathology, surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy (Table B). This number is estimated from the percentage of patients requiring surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy for the top ten cancers in both men and women.

For developing countries the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recommends training Radiation/Clinical Oncologists who can prescribe both radiation and chemotherapy for the common solid cancers, instead of separate medical and radiation oncologists. Hematological malignancies are treated primarily by hematologist-oncologists. The number of specialists needed is based upon the number of cancer patients but each city, in order to ensure coverage if one person leaves or goes on vacation, must have at least 2 surgical oncologists, 2 radiation/clinical oncologists, 2 hematologist oncologists, etc.

Table B: Number of Oncologists needed for Georgia's 2 most populous cities based on 2012 population estimates (<http://citypopulation.de/>) and 2012 GLOBOCAN data for new cancer cases.

	Population	New Cancer Cases	Hematologist Oncologists	Surgical Oncologists	Radiation / Clinical Oncologists	Urologic Oncologists	Gynecologic Oncologists	Neuro-Oncologists	Pathologists
Tbilisi	1172700	3368	2 <sup>✧</sup>	4	17	2 <sup>✧</sup>	2 <sup>✧</sup>	2 <sup>✧</sup>	7
Kutaisi	196800	566	2 <sup>✧</sup>	2 <sup>✧</sup>	3	2 <sup>✧</sup>	2 <sup>✧</sup>	2 <sup>✧</sup>	2

<sup>✧</sup>At least 2 are needed in each city.

In addition to oncologists, support staff such as onco-pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, oncology nurses and palliative care specialists is also needed. Many cancer patients require hospitalization for diagnosis, treatment and/or complications, therefore an adequate number of oncology beds will be needed. The

number of oncology nurses, onco-pharmacists and pharmacy technicians needed is based upon the number of beds occupied daily by cancer patients while the number of palliative care specialists is based on the number of new cancer cases per year (Table C). The oncology nursing staff for each 24-bed oncology unit (operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) comprises of one head nurse and a nurse specialist as well as 13 nurses working 8 hour shifts, 5 days per week.

Table C: Number of Oncology Units, Nursing and Pharmacy Staff needed for Georgia’s 2 most populous cities based on 2012 population estimates and 2012 GLOBOCAN data for new cancer cases.

	<b>New Cancer Cases</b>	<b>Maximum # of beds/day</b>	<b># of 24 bed oncology wards</b>	<b>Onco-Pharmacists</b>	<b>Onco-Pharmacy Technicians</b>	<b>Palliative Care Specialists</b>	<b>Oncology Nursing Staff other than Radiation Oncology Nurses</b>
Tbilisi	3368	62	3	12	18	7	45
Kutaisi	566	11	1	4	6	2	15

Since many cancer patients require radiotherapy, appropriately equipped facilities will be needed along with radiation oncology staff (Tables D and E). Radiation oncology staff includes radiation therapy technicians, medical physicists, Linac engineers and radiation oncology nurses in addition to radiation/clinical oncologists. The minimum radiation therapy equipment requirements are at least one of each: Linac, brachytherapy unit, CT simulator, treatment planning computer and dosimetry/quality assurance package.

Table D: Radiation Therapy Staff needed for Georgia’s 2 most populous cities based on 2012 population estimates and 2012 GLOBOCAN data for new cancer cases.

	<b>New Cancer Cases</b>	<b>Radiation / Clinical Oncologists</b>	<b>Radiation Therapy Technicians</b>	<b>Medical Physicists</b>	<b>Linac Engineers</b>	<b>Radiation Oncology Nurses</b>
Tbilisi	3368	17	24	8	2	8
Kutaisi	566	3	4	2	2 <sup>y</sup>	2

<sup>y</sup>At least 2 are needed in each city.

Table E: Radiation Therapy Equipment needed for Georgia’s 2 most populous cities based on 2012 population estimates and 2012 GLOBOCAN data for new cancer cases.

	<b>New Cancer Cases</b>	<b>Linacs / Co 60 Megavolt Units</b>	<b># of Brachytherapy units</b>	<b># CT simulators</b>	<b># of treatment planning computers</b>	<b># of dosimetry/ QA package</b>
Tbilisi	3368	4	2	2	2	2
Kutaisi	566	1	1	1	1	1

NOTE: Guidelines from the IAEA of the United Nations were used to calculate the radiation therapy equipment and staff needed in the setting of a developing country. Guidelines from the Oncology Nursing Society were used to calculate the number of nurses needed. Several other specialty societies were also requested to provide guidelines but in most cases there were none, therefore colleagues active in those fields were consulted for estimating the number of staff needed.