

## Inaugural Meeting of the Society for Neuro-Oncology Sub-Saharan Africa

The first meeting of the Society for Neuro-Oncology Sub-Saharan Africa (SNOSSA) was held at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja on 22-23 July, 2018. SNOSSA was borne out of the first Sub-Saharan Africa Neuro-Oncology Collaborative (S-SANOC) planning meeting in London last year (read more here), which was facilitated by the International outreach committee of the Society for Neuro-Oncology (SNO) led by Gelareh Zadeh, the International Brain Tumour Alliance (IBTA), the Greg-Wilkins Barrick Chair in International Surgery of the University of Toronto, and the Zimbabwe Brain Tumor Association (ZBTA) with the additional support of the European Association of Neuro-Oncology (EANO), Indian Society of Neuro-Oncology (ISNO) and the Asian Society of Neuro-Oncology (ASNO).

The meeting was attended by delegates from Sub-Saharan African countries as well as speakers drawn from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, India and Greece.

There were a variety of sessions throughout the event, covering a range of topics. These included talks that considered the landscape of neuro-oncology in sub-Saharan Africa alongside discussions about gliomas. The highlight of this session was a keynote address by Rakesh Jalali, in which he concisely addressed the WHO 2016 update of brain tumours and the practical recommendations in the clinics – particularly in low-medium income countries. The session ended with a great talk from Evangelia Razis about palliative care for patients with brain tumours, in which she also noted the need for care providers to give psychological support.

The paediatric tumour session was kick-started by the President of the International Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOP) Eric Bouffet, who gave an exciting

talk about the management of medulloblastomas. Discussion centred on adapting the care of medulloblastoma to sub-Saharan Africa and leveraging on the recommendations of SIOP. There were also insightful discussions on the challenge of caring for children with gliomas and craniopharyngiomas.

The second day of the meeting had a thrilling patient advocacy session, which was co-sponsored by the IBTA, with talks about “the physician as a patient advocate”, the challenges of advocacy in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa, and the challenges faced by caregivers of brain tumour patients. The session brought to the fore the need for collaboration between physicians and patient advocates, the need for increased listening and empathy by providers and the need to document the available neuro-oncology capacity in sub-Saharan Africa to facilitate access to services.

The event hosted panel discussions that looked at education, research and collaboration within and outside Africa. Chas Haynes, the executive director of the Society for Neuro-Oncology (SNO), explained more about the

continuing support of SNO and the development of a resource to document neuro-oncology capacity in sub-Saharan Africa, which will also serve as an educational portal. He read a goodwill message from IBTA co-Director Kathy Oliver.

The meeting ended with a SNOSSA business meeting, where the Society’s Constitution was adopted and an Executive Council - to be led by James Balogun - elected. Two patient advocates were elected to the Executive Council: Bonita Suckling of Rainbows and Smiles in South Africa and Irene Azong-Wara of Jacob’s Hope Foundation in Cameroon. The hosting for the 2019 SNOSSA meeting was awarded to Cape Town, South Africa with Professor Alan Davidson as the conference chair.

