IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS PROGRAM FOR FIVE CHILDHOOD CANCERS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. A FINAL REPORT FROM GFAOP

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Background

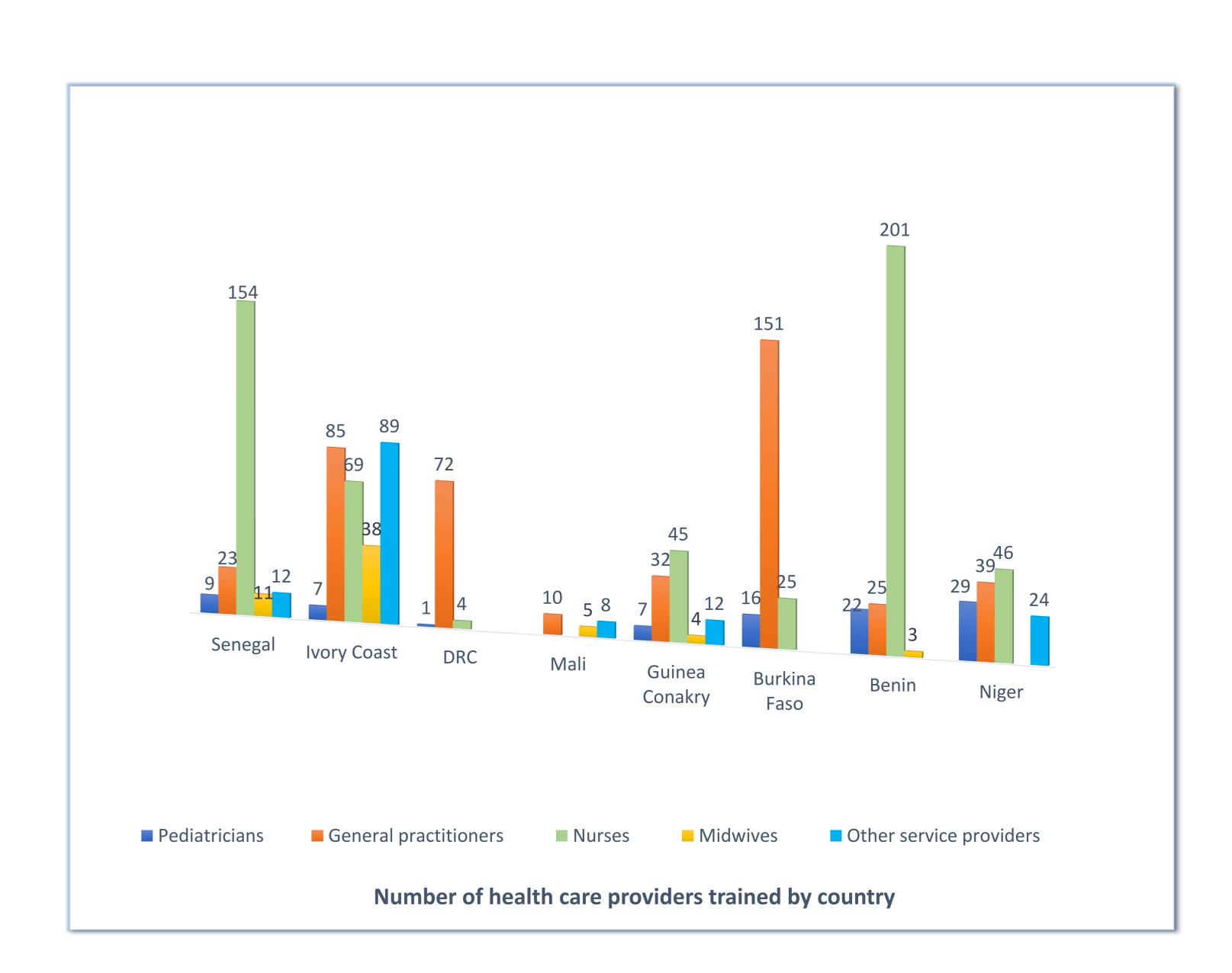
In Sub-Saharan Africa, like in other low-income countries, delayed diagnosis is the first cause of death by cancer in children. Developing early diagnosis tools, trainings healthcare givers (HCG) as well as raising awareness among populations is paramount to improve survival rates.

Material and Methods: two workshops on designing and validating childhood cancer education and awareness tools were conducted in 2019 with pediatric oncology experts and health authorities from Senegal. Educational modules on detection of early signs leading to the diagnosis of five main children's cancers (Retinoblastoma, Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, Wilms Tumor, Burkitt and Hodgkin Lymphoma) were developed and harmonized. These modules (manuals, flyers, posters), intended for general practitioners, nurses and other healthcare givers have been used to train trainers and then to train healthcare givers. In 2022, these modules have been digitalized for online teaching.



Results: during the 2019-2022 campaign in eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 1278 HCG were trained, including general practitioners, pediatricians, nurses, midwives, and other health technicians, as part of 33 training workshops. Thirty-eight HCG participated in distance learning to strengthen their knowledge of early diagnosis childhood cancer in April May 2022.

Post formative onsite evaluation in two pilot districts in Senegal including 44 HCG showed the referral of 21 patients. Experimental digital technology is under development to support HCG in swiftly referring patients to services for children with cancer in two countries (Senegal and Burkina Faso).



Conclusion: the implementation of effective tools to enhance early diagnosis may improve the survival of children with cancer in Sub-Saharan Africa. Demonstrating such an impact will need further development in additional regions and countries in the coming years.

