

Dr. Margaret Barton-Burke - Story

Margaret is the Director of Nursing Research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) in New York City. In her role, she focuses on enhancing the research and clinical expertise of staff nurses through her mentorship and commitment to nursing education. She revised the Nursing Research Fellowship, instituted regular Research Forum for MSK nurses to learn from national and international nursing scholars, and facilitates grantsmanship and funding opportunities to support nursing research.

Margaret is an academic at heart and demonstrates her leadership by passionately spreading her knowledge of research and education throughout the world. She became affectionately known as “Dr. Margaret” throughout Africa for her work. Margaret focused on building research capacity in sub-Saharan Africa in collaboration with the African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship Awards, sponsored by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in Nairobi, Kenya and the International Development Research Center of Canada. Through the APHRC, Margaret met Dr. Abimbola Olawatosin, a professor from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Together, they developed a fellowship project for a nurse-run breast cancer screen intervention in rural Nigeria.

Margaret has also worked with the American Society of Clinical Oncology on an outreach program in Eldoret, Kenya and taught nurses about symptom management. She further has served as the mentor for a group of Kenyan nurses conducting a funded study on cancer health literacy.

Under the auspices of individual health ministries and the World Health Organization, chemotherapy was introduced into Africa. This led Margaret to teach a cancer chemotherapy program: Chemo Safe in Kenya. This program received increasing interest from providers in Nigeria. A collaborative team of physicians from MSK and Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Nigerian nurses, and Margaret developed a proposal for enhancing strong clinical competencies, leadership, and clinical research training. The proposal additionally included methods for teaching chemotherapy preparation, administration, and disposal. This goal-oriented team further sought to build a clinical facility with oncology units and palliative care. This important work led to the creation of the African Research Group for Oncology (ARGO) in 2012. It is the first National Cancer Institute-approved Colorectal Consortium in Africa.

While attending an ARGO Conference in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Margaret began a research project assessing the types and kinds of research that clinical professionals seek. She later expanded the study to providers at the breast cancer symposium in Kenya.

Margaret is an active member of the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care. She travels to Auckland, New Zealand to present current findings on the educational needs of Kenyan women diagnosed with breast and cervical cancers, builds research capacity and infrastructure through nursing research fellowship programs, and delivers oncology nurse training in Africa.

Another part of Margaret’s global journey is her work as an international academic. As an international visiting professor at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, Margaret provides leadership talks to nurses regarding her work in oncology. Here,

she also highlights how cancer care improves because of the knowledge gleaned from research. Margaret additionally shares her research and ideas on evidence-based nursing practice with Ph.D. doctoral students in Seoul, South Korea. She is a member of the editorial board for the Asian Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing and an invited lecturer at The Chinese University of Hong Kong Nethersole School of Nursing. A natural collaborator, Margaret developed interdisciplinary research partnerships, collaborations, and scholarship in the US, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea.

Margaret is extremely dedicated to understanding the challenges for care and research in under-resourced areas and for under-represented minorities. Margaret is an expert in oncology and proved to be a visionary leader in developing research and education initiatives for nurses around the world.