

ARUGA SA BATANG MAY CANCER (ABC)



THE PROBLEM

Cancer remains as one of the top causes of death worldwide, affecting around 300,000 children aged 0-19 years annually. In the Philippines, at least 5,000 Filipino children are diagnosed with cancer every year, and nearly two-thirds of them are already in advanced stages. Experts say that cancer is a manageable and curable disease, however, there is still a high mortality rate in the country as around 80% of Filipino children abandon their cancer treatment. According to health specialists, effective cancer treatment entails early detection, proper handling, and palliative care. Most patients diagnosed with advanced cancer stages use palliative care which helps alleviate the patient's symptoms such as pain usually caused by anticancer treatments. Palliative care is a specialized medical care and its goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. The problem is that, although doctors deem palliative care as one of the effective services for cancer patients, most still see it as an "option" and not as equally important as the cancer treatment itself. This is because supportive care services are expensive and most healthcare providers in the country are not fully equipped with the knowledge and training on palliative care.

THE SOLUTION

In response to the inaccessibility to support care services among pediatric cancer patients in the country, a web-based platform called **Aruga sa Batang may Cancer or ABC** (www.arugaproject.com) was developed to increase access to palliative care information, services, and experts not just for the patients, but even to caregivers, medical professionals, and health providers. Developed by the University of the Philippines-Open University, in collaboration with the Philippine Children's Medical Center, ABC makes it possible for patients to access oncology experts and specialists despite the geographical hindrance. The platform provides access to online training courses for medical professionals and caregivers through their Learning Management Systems. Resource materials for caregivers are available in the form of text, photos and videos in three languages—Bisaya, English and Tagalog. Doctors and allied-health professionals can avail of training programs as ABC's Learning Management System component is designed to capacitate healthcare professionals on palliative care, and primary caregivers with ample knowledge on supporting and caring for their children. ABC also grants access to the Pediatric Cancer Registry to help visualize the country's situation in terms of statistics of pediatric cancer which may be helpful for policymakers in program and policy development.



TECHNOLOGY GENERATOR

University of the Philippines-Open University
Project Leaders: Rita C. Ramos, MAN; Loyda Amor N. Cajucum, MAN, RN; and Primo G. Garcia, PhD

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The Aruga sa Batang may Cancer website was launched in March 2019 as part of UP-Open University's 24th anniversary celebration. The features of the website are still under pilot testing, while its learning management system for caregivers and medical professionals including the resource materials are already accessible through the website. ABC's cancer registry and telemedicine features are still under construction and development.

Interested technology adopters may send a letter of intent addressed to:



Aruga sa Batang may Cancer Initiative Office
University of the Philippines – Open University Headquarters
inquiry@arugaproject.com