Introduction

- The rates of cancer diagnoses, specifically of lung and breast cancers, are on the rise in Tunisia.
- The healthcare infrastructure surrounding cancer prevention and diagnoses are not catching up to the needs of a growing patient population.

Objective of Internship

To begin research on what the lacunas are in Tunisia’s cancer care infrastructure.

Reflection

- Cancer diagnoses in Tunisia are on the rise, partly due to increased screening capabilities but also due to changes in lifestyle.
- Currently treatment is concentrated in the capital city, making access to care difficult for those living in other parts of the country.
- As number of cases increased, resources did not which results in an over-burdening of doctors, staff, and equipment.
- Tunisia suffers from what is nicknamed “medicine at two speeds”: the technical aspects of medicine (drugs, machines, doctor knowledge) are very much up-to-date, but the human aspect is lagging behind.
- The effects of the 2011 Revolution have also compounded the problems; doctors are overworked, government support is lacking, and the general chaos that has pervaded the country has also affected the medical system.
- Patient care has collapsed to the point where effective treatment is no longer guaranteed and the erosion of the professional environment is pushing personnel to leave the field altogether.

Looking ahead

This research project as allowed me to take a first step in exploring the problems that I aim to tackle to in my senior thesis project. I aim to return to Tunis to continue this research process.

Questions

- What is the relationship between medical personnel and government authorities?
- What are patient perspectives on the way cancer is treated?

Conclusion

As of yet, no conclusions can be draw as this preliminary research served to generate questions. The project was very helpful in providing me with base background knowledge on the issue of cancer care in Tunisia and will be greatly beneficial to my subsequent trips.

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