

# *Pathology - the 'missing link' in global health care delivery*

**CUGH conference, New York March 16, 2018**

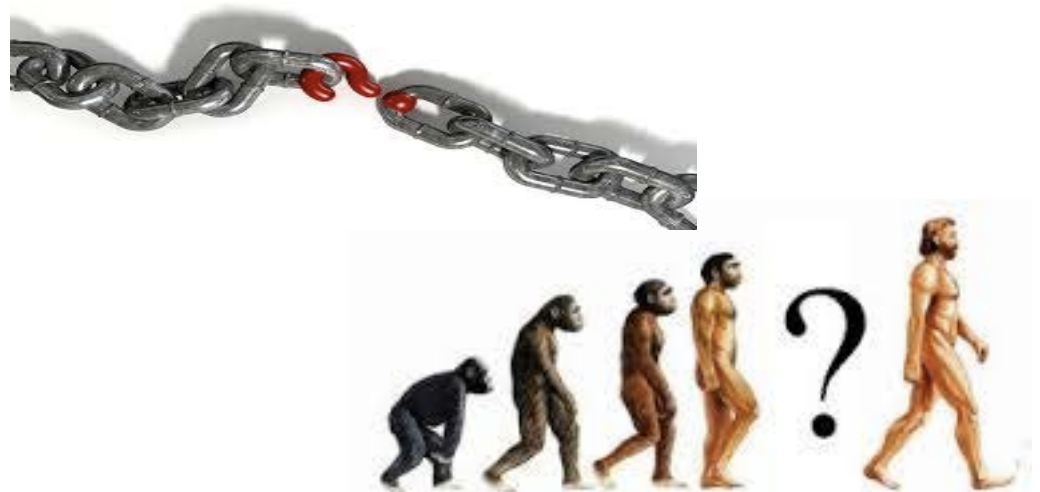
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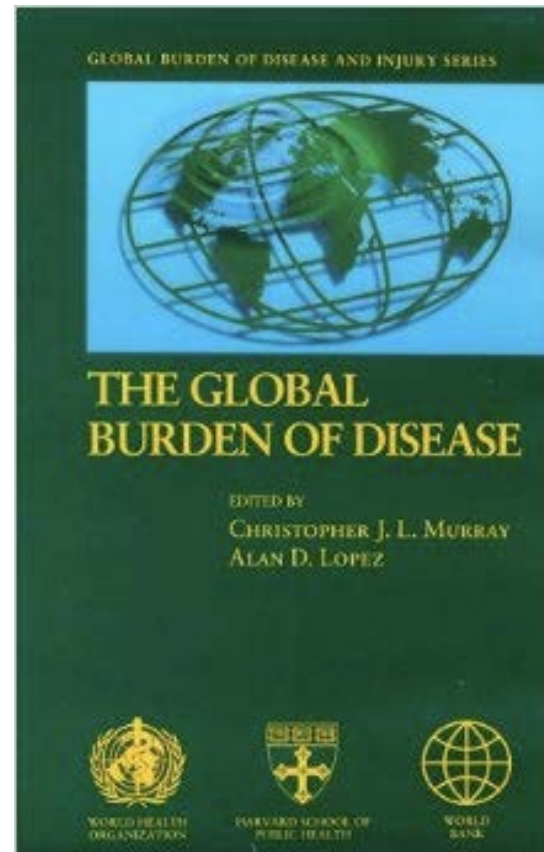
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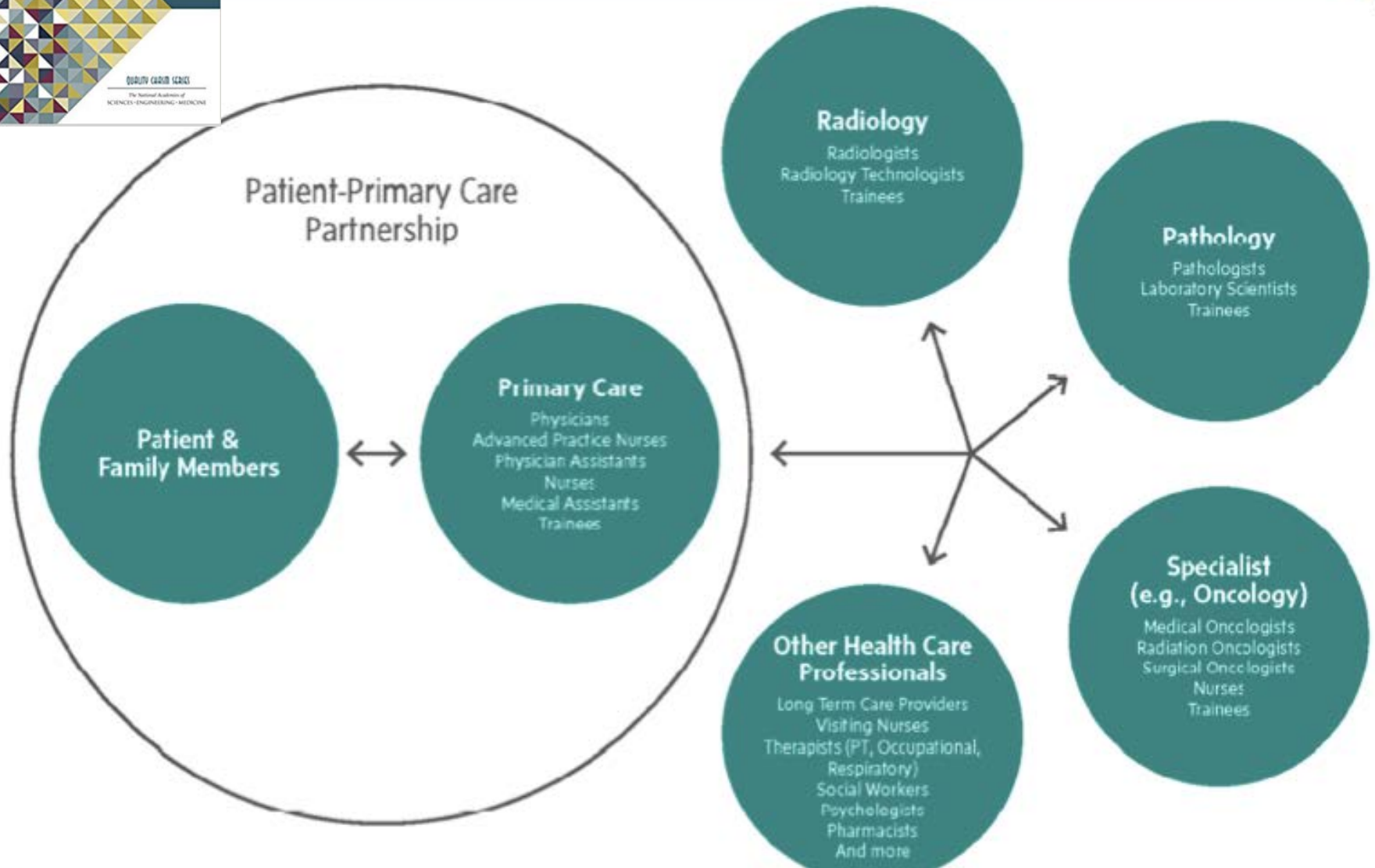
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*“It is difficult to deliver effective and high quality care to patients without knowing their diagnosis.”*

# Players in Improving Diagnosis



# Pathology in Low Resource Settings – wide range of facilities & training

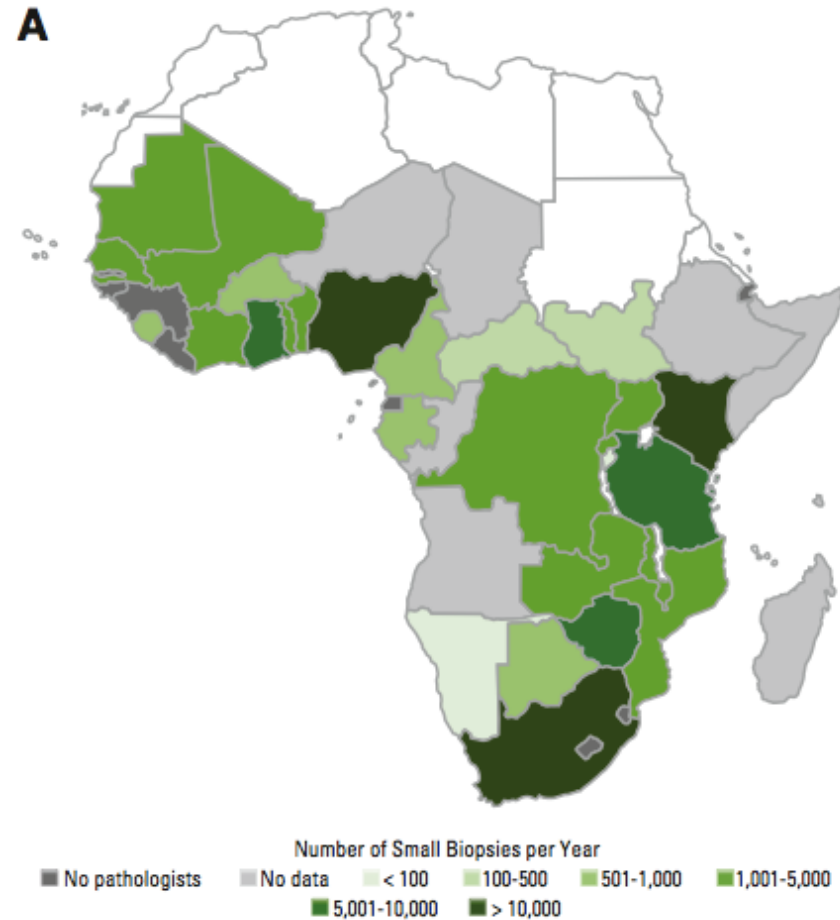
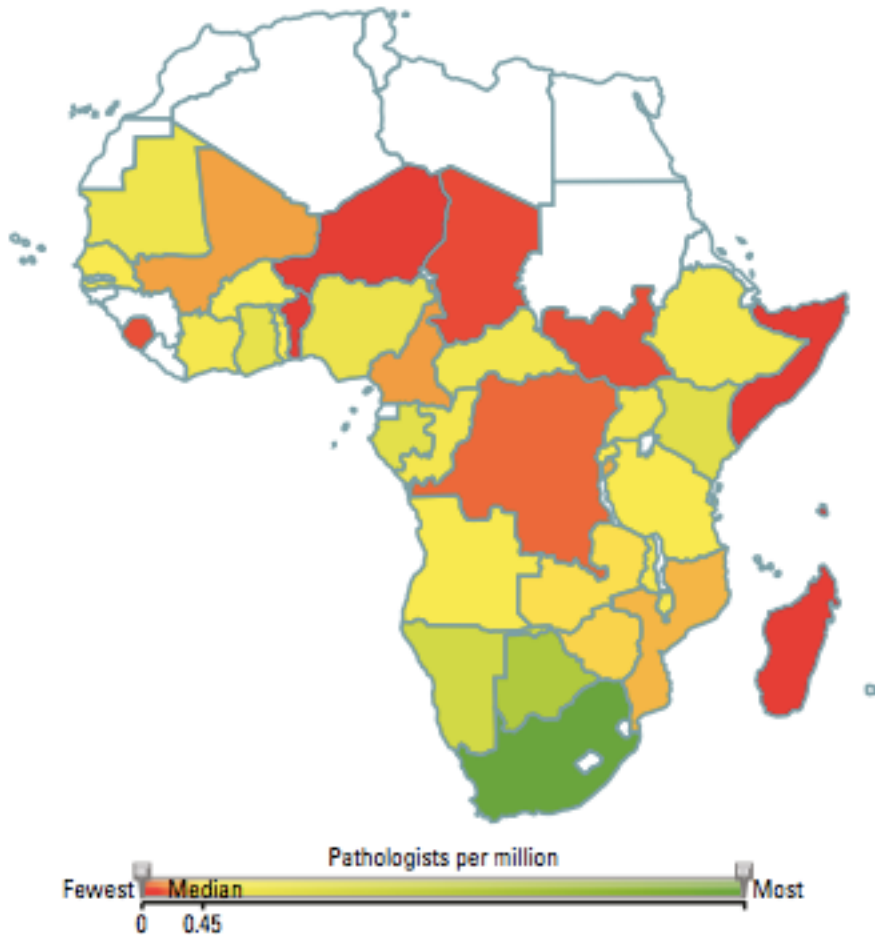


# Role of Pathology in Health Delivery System

- **Diagnosis – right dx, for right patient, at right time**
- **Disease staging & prognosis** - ongoing assessment to support clinical care
- **Monitoring clinical response** to treatment
- **Disease surveillance** eg disease registries
- **Quality assurance within health care system**

# Pathology Capacity in Africa -

(shortfall: 27 000 pathologists; 450 years to fill at current capacitation rates!)





# Domino Effect of Inadequate Pathology Diagnostics in Low Resource Settings

Mis/under-diagnosis leads to inadequate treatment referral



Inadequate referral > inadequate follow-up



Treatment delays  
Poorer clinical outcomes  
Suboptimal/wasteful use of limited resources in LRS.



Inadequate reporting of disease rates, incidence, prevalence,  
mortality  
Limits ability to plan for medical care needs in LRS





# Uniqueness of Pathology as a medical specialty?

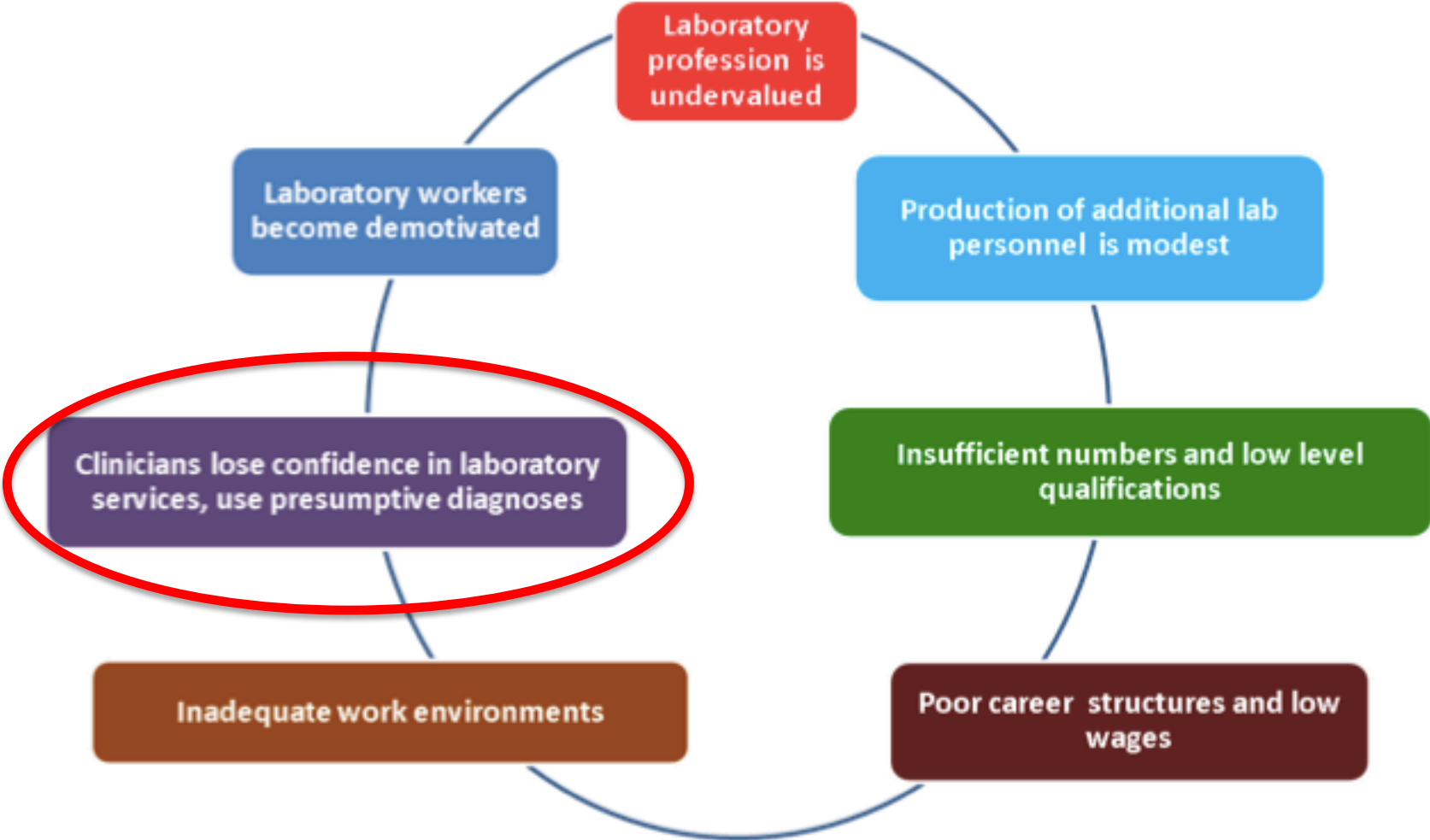
built and dependent on another entire discipline –

**THE CLINICAL/ANATOMIC LABORATORIES**





# Box 1: A Vicious Cycle



# Interdependence of laboratory and clinical services

*“.. clinicians can lose confidence in laboratory services, and resort to presumptive diagnoses rather than laboratory information. In return, laboratory staff can become demotivated by the lack of faith in their profession.”*

*World Bank Group 2014: Laboratory professionals in Africa: the backbone of quality diagnostics*

# Tiered Pathology Test Approach

- Requires integrated network of pathology laboratories working together across tiers with pathologists/clinicians for effective treatment and referral of patients – context appropriate
1. Scale, manage and capacitate pathology testing appropriate to geographic and healthcare **CONTEXTS**
  2. **LESS COSTLY** than attempting full menu testing everywhere
  3. **EASIER TO MAINTAIN** fewer quality standards, less equipment
  4. More **EFFECTIVE HEALTH DELIVERY**

# Take Home Messages

- 1. Inaccurate diagnosis = waste and higher costs downstream**
  - Low resource settings cannot afford such waste
- 2. Pathology is not a “stand alone” but integral part of health system** – outcomes depend on ALL system parts working together to provide **right diagnosis, right person, right time**
- 1. Sustainability of services** depends on (1) **Effective laboratory systems** (2) **education, training and accreditation systems**; (2) **quality standards**; (3) **buy-in of MOHs**; (4) **lab information systems**; (5) **reimbursement**

# Thank You

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