

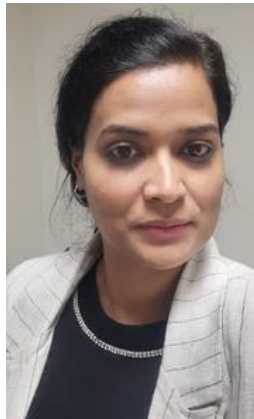
# 2025-2026 ASCO-AORTIC International Clinical Research Scholars

## *Meet The Scholars*



Adja Coumba Diallo, MD, MPH, MS  
Assistant Professor, Surgical Oncology  
Cheikh Anta Diop University  
Dakar, Senegal

Dr. Adja Coumba Diallo, a surgical oncologist in Saint-Louis, Senegal, is committed to equitable cancer care in Africa. In 2021, she founded the region's first cancer unit, treating over 200 patients locally and training specialized oncology nurses. Her work reflects a passion for decentralizing expertise and tackling disparities in resource-limited settings. A member of ASCO and AORTIC, she actively fosters global oncology collaborations through the African Center Leadership Institute. Currently, she's researching triple-negative breast cancer outcomes in Senegal, aiming to establish a regional research hub to mentor future clinician-scientists.



Afrin Fatima Shaffi, MBBS, MMed, C.FELL.  
Gynecologic oncology  
The Nairobi West Hospital  
Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Afrin Fatma Shaffi is a gynecologic oncologist dedicated to improving cancer outcomes for women in low-resource settings across Africa. With clinical experience in Kenya and Malawi, she combines surgical expertise, research leadership, and health systems strengthening. She currently practices at The Nairobi West Hospital in Kenya and serves as a visiting consultant at Kijabe Mission Hospital, reflecting a commitment to expand access to cancer treatment in underserved communities.

Dr. Shaffi's clinical journey includes working with international organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), notably in Malawi's Cervical Cancer Program, where she contributed to gynecologic oncology care. She has also led outreach clinics and surgical camps across underserved regions in Kenya, gaining extensive experience in managing gynecologic cancers in low-resource settings and advancing equitable access to cancer care. Additionally, she contributes to national training initiatives, including colposcopy training for health care workers, and participate in protocol development through the Ministry of Health's National Cancer Control Program.

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Her research focuses on improving survival and quality of life for women with ovarian and cervical cancers. She has presented findings at international conferences and served as the country lead for the landmark *Every Woman Study™* in Kenya, a global initiative by the World Ovarian Cancer Coalition in collaboration with the International Gynecologic Cancer Society (IGCS), where she contributed to shaping the national understanding of ovarian cancer care and patient experiences. She is a recipient of the NIH U54 Mentorship Grant and the FIGO Chien-Tien Hsu Fellowship, which collectively support her research on improving outcomes and quality of life for women with gynecologic cancers in low-resource settings and ongoing professional development in gynecologic oncology. In addition to her research, she has authored multiple peer-reviewed publications, with a particular focus on ovarian and cervical cancer.

Dr. Shaffi has completed a Clinical Fellowship in Gynecological Oncology through Moi University and the IGCS Global Gynecologic Oncology Fellowship Program. She holds a Master of Medicine in Obstetrics and Gynecology from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences and a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from Manipal College of Medical Sciences.

She is committed to supporting women's health through clinical care, education, and research, and is grateful for opportunities such as the International Clinical Research Scholars Program in Africa (ICRS) to further contribute to improving outcomes in low-resource settings.



Alhaji Mohamed Koroma, MD  
Clinical Oncologist  
34 Military Hospital/Connaught Hospital  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Dr. Koroma is a clinical oncologist from Sierra Leone, currently pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH). His career is dedicated to addressing the psychosocial aspects of cancer care, particularly focusing on Hepatocellular Carcinoma, cervical, and breast cancer. In Sierra Leone, late-stage diagnoses and lack of psychosocial support are significant challenges in cancer care. Through Dr. Koroma's MPH studies, he aims to integrate public health strategies with oncology to create holistic care models addressing emotional, mental, and social challenges. The ICRS Africa program offers an ideal platform to enhance research skills in clinical trial design, biostatistics, and data analysis, allowing him to implement interventions that improve cancer care and patient outcomes in resource constrained settings. His long-term goal is to lead oncological research in Sierra Leone and West Africa, focusing on both medical and psychosocial cancer care aspects.

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Amanda Badjo Amankwata, MBChB  
Clinical Oncology  
Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital  
Kumasi, Ghana

Dr. Amanda Badjo Amankwata is a clinical oncologist at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) with about 8 years' work experience in the department of Oncology where she has gained significant expertise in the management of various oncology conditions including but not limited to breast, cervical and prostate cancer. She is highly skilled at diagnosing, treating, and monitoring patients with cancer, providing comprehensive care as well as communication, leadership, and ability to impart knowledge.

Dr. Amankwata is dedicated to providing high-quality care for cancer patients by actively engaging in multidisciplinary tumour board meetings and also by staying updated with the latest advancements in the field of oncology. She is a member of both American Society of Clinical Oncologists (ASCO) and European Society of Clinical Oncologists (ESMO) and has participated in both local and international conferences in order to stay updated with cutting-edge research and advancements in the field of oncology.

She is actively involved in the training of residents in oncology as well as nurses undertaking the nurse oncology program by organizing lecture series with them.

As a young oncologist, Dr. Amankwata has observed the relatively low research culture in developing countries and desires to replicate the problem-solving culture of developed countries in my directorate and country as a whole. She believes the ICRS will equip and enable her to become well positioned to conduct studies at her hospital.

Her research interest is in breast, prostate and gynecological malignancies such as cervical cancer. It is her dream to share the experience as a hospital in the treatment of these malignancies. Dr. Amankwata intends to determine the survival outcomes, factors that positively or negatively affect survival and also evaluate the pattern of care in these patients. Current practice guidelines are based on information from Caucasians and African-Americans and it appears treatment outcomes in black Africans is extrapolated from that of African Americans. With her hospital being the second largest Ghana, she would like to see it one of the accrual sites in future clinical trials.

Presently, there are nine clinical oncologists at her hospital with five residents in training. It is her aspiration to develop research and leadership skills to effectively mentor other young oncologists. One of the challenges observed in her practice is that despite numerous campaign and screening programs held in the country, quite a number of cancer patients still present late to the hospital. It appears these screening programs are limited to urban areas with most people living in rural communities lacking access to awareness and screening programs. This lack of awareness makes them

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resort to unorthodox approaches such as herbal preparations with such patients seeing the hospital as their last resort. Dr. Amankwata looks forward to developing leadership skills and training more stakeholders like community health nurses to organize frequent screening programs in their communities for early detection of malignancies like breast and cervical cancer.



Eunice Andrew Shija, MD, MMed  
Hematologic Oncology  
Muhimbili National Hospital  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Dr. Eunice Andrew Shija is a Haematologist from Tanzania, currently serving as a Medical Specialist at Muhimbili National Hospital, where she is the Head of the Hematology Unit and Bone Marrow Transplant Coordinator. She also serves as an Honorary Lecturer at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS).

In her clinical practice, Dr. Shija manages a significant number of patients with hematological malignancies, many of whom face challenges of suboptimal care due to limited access and affordability of diagnostic services and treatment options. These experiences have shaped her strong focus on hematopathology and molecular diagnostics, with her work dedicated to bridging diagnostic, treatment and research gaps in the management of myeloid malignancies in Tanzania.

Motivated by a commitment to improving cancer care in resource-limited settings, Dr. Shija leverages global training experiences, including an award from the American Society of Hematology, to generate locally relevant and impactful data that aim to improve hematological malignancy patient outcomes in her community.



Glenda Ndiparah Nkeng Nkongho, MBChB  
Medical Oncology  
Regional Hospital Buea  
Buea, Cameroon

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Dr. Glenda Ndiparah Nkeng Nkongho is a medical oncologist who recently graduated from the Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University of Yaounde as valedictorian. She is passionate about research and did a certificate program on the foundation of clinical research at Harvard Medical School (online). Dr. Nkongho believes that the only way to improve cancer care in Cameroon and Africa is by research. Finding out ways to improve on health policies and care is key on decreasing the mortality rate in Cameroon.

Dr. Nkongho is a hard worker and diligent in her work as can be seen by the honors received at the end of her general medicine degree and specialization degree. Also, she was recently posted to the South-West region of Cameroon to open a new oncology unit in the region. It will help improve the accessibility of patients to doctors. With the number of articles Dr. Nkongho has co-authored, she has developed the skill of working together and strongly believes it is impossible to carry out a great project without the support of a good team.



Hiwot Yeshitila Amare, MD  
Assistant Professor of Surgery  
Addis Ababa University  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. Hiwot Yeshitila Amare is a highly dedicated breast and endocrine surgeon serving at the country's leading tertiary referral hospital. As Head of the Breast and Endocrine Surgery Unit, she oversees the management of a high surgical volume, performing approximately 250 operations annually for breast and endocrine malignancies. Her clinical expertise focuses on breast cancer and thyroid malignancies, where she combines surgical excellence with compassionate patient care.

In addition to her clinical responsibilities, Dr. Hiwot is deeply committed to medical education. She plays a key role in training residents and fellows, fostering the next generation of surgeons. Her academic work includes active involvement in research, with a particular emphasis on breast cancer awareness, early detection, and improving treatment outcomes. She is also highly engaged in research activities.

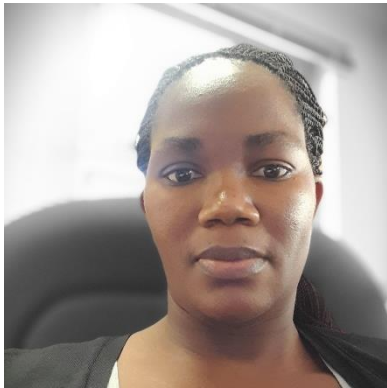
Beyond the hospital, Dr. Hiwot devotes significant time to community engagement and volunteer work, especially in initiatives addressing women's cancers. She leads and participates in numerous awareness campaigns and outreach programs aimed at

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empowering communities with knowledge about breast cancer prevention, screening, and treatment options.

Through her clinical, research, academic, and community-based efforts, Dr. Hiwot continues to make a substantial impact in advancing breast cancer care and advocating for women's health in her country.



Ireen Chanda, MBChB  
Clinical and Radiation Oncology  
Zambia College of Medicine and Surgery  
Lusaka, Zambia

Dr. Ireen Chanda is a Senior Registrar in Clinical and Radiation Oncologist at the Cancer Diseases Hospital (CDH), in Lusaka, the only cancer center in Zambia center offering comprehensive cancer care. Dr. Chanda is interested and passionate towards improving cancer care for women and men with breast cancer at the institution and the nation. Her recent work has included active participation in review and development of breast cancer manual for healthcare workers which aims to standardize, expand and decentralize quality breast cancer healthcare services among health care workers (HCWs). Currently she is working on a research project on Epidemiology and Clinical Outcomes of De Novo Metastatic Breast Cancer at the Cancer Diseases Hospital Lusaka, Zambia. She underwent training by MD Anderson team in clinical research which provided her with basic knowledge in clinical research, and she looks forward to utilizing this knowledge. She is eager to take part in research to improve patient navigation through improved system linkage processes among health care workers there by reducing delays to timely diagnosis and treatment initiation.



Irene Alinafe Chidothe Chisale, MD, FC RAD  
ONC  
Chief Oncologist and Head of Clinical  
Services – Malawi National Cancer Centre  
Clinical Lecturer – Kamuzu University of  
Health Sciences, Malawi

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Dr. Irene Alinafe Chidothe Chisale is a clinical oncologist and oncology educator with a dedicated focus on advancing oncology training, education, mentorship, and strengthening of health systems. Her clinical interests include quality assurance in radiotherapy, genitourinary malignancies, and radiation therapy for pediatric cancers. She is in the process of establishing radiotherapy standards at the recently inaugurated first-ever public radiotherapy center in Malawi.

Dr. Chidothe is a recipient of the 2018 Harvard-POETIC Observership award, the 2024 Queens Global Oncology Faculty Development Award, the 2025 Conquer Cancer -ASCO IDEA Award, and now a 2025 ASCO-AORTIC ICR Scholar. These honors are shaping her career, enhancing her research and leadership skills, and providing invaluable collaborative opportunities to improve oncology practice in her setting.

The drive to enhance her research skills stems from the growing emphasis on personalized oncology, the need to address cancer-specific knowledge gaps in my country, and the opportunity to lead a clinical and research-based training program. Specifically, Dr. Chidothe would like to enhance her grant-writing and application skills through the ICRS program.

As she completes learning towards a Master's in Global Health Implementation degree, She is evaluating *'health system costs and outcomes of neoadjuvant chemotherapy in locally advanced cervical cancer'* in a setting without functional radiotherapy services. This has provided her with valuable insights into the intersection of clinical oncology and health system challenges.



Iyanuoluwa Oreofe Ojo, RN, PhD  
Lecturer, Faculty of Nursing  
University of Ibadan  
Ibadan, Nigeria

Dr Iyanuoluwa O. Ojo is a lecturer in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria. She began her nursing education at the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology in Ogbomoso, also in Oyo State, where she obtained certificates in registered nursing, midwifery, and public health nursing, as well as a Bachelor of Nursing Science degree. She then attended the Advanced Nursing College in Oyo, also in Oyo State, where she obtained an occupational health certificate. She went on to obtain postgraduate degrees (an MSc and a PhD) in Medical-Surgical Nursing from the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University. In 2020, she received the NANDA Foundation Grant from the Marjory Gordon Programme at the School of Nursing in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Her research interests include oncology nursing, standardised nursing terminologies and genetics/genomic nursing.

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Nana Jacqueline Nakiddu, MBChB, Mmed  
Lecturer/Paediatric Hematologist-  
Oncologist  
Muhimbili University of Health and Allied  
Sciences  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Dr. Nana Jacqueline Nakiddu is a lecturer and practicing pediatric hematologist-oncologist at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences/Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania. With over ten years of clinical and research experience in East Africa and a pedagogical background spanning five years, she is deeply committed to advancing pediatric healthcare in the region. She completed sub-specialty training in pediatric hematology and oncology at Makerere University, Uganda, under the auspices of Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital Global HOPE programs and have accumulated five years of hands-on experience in this field.

Dr. Nakiddu's research focus is on developing innovative models for the delivery of childhood cancer survivorship care in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. In these settings, cancer survivorship care is still in its early stages despite the major advancements in access to diagnosis and treatment of paediatric cancers. Through partnerships with widely revered medical institutions, several African academic medical centres have made remarkable strides in improving survival rates for children with cancer through local training and infrastructure development. Dr. Nakiddu's ultimate career goal is to lead training, care and research initiatives for the growing population of childhood cancer survivors across Africa.



Kenn Chi Ndi, MD, DES  
Medical Oncology  
Centre Hospitalier Régional d'Ebouwa  
Ngalan, Ebouwa, South Region, Cameroon

Dr. Kenn Chi Ndi defended his thesis for an MD Degree in June 2019, and he has been involved in cancer research since 2020, in addition to being an IC2021 alumnus. He is part of a collaborative work between Nigeria, Cameroon, and the University of Chicago called "Genetic Cancer Families (GENCAF)", under the leadership of Professors Olufunmilayo Olopade and Dezheng Huo. The project

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aims to identify families at risk of cancer to provide preventive strategies through genetic counseling and testing. This project's preliminary study revealed a substantial proportion of cancer patients reporting positive family histories of malignancy. Encouragingly, almost all participants—including those without documented family cancer history or prior genetic literacy—expressed strong willingness to undergo genetic counseling and testing services if made available. Moreover, the recent genetic analysis study showed a 28% pathogenic mutation rate with a third of these being one particular BRCA1 mutation (c.4484G>T(p.Arg1495Met). Albeit, the small sample size (n=82) limit the generalizability and warrant confirmation in larger studies.

Dr. Ndi is now in the South Region of Cameroon, Africa, where he has begun clinical cancer genetics with little steps of pedigree drawing and risk score calculations for screening and preventive measures, while anticipating incorporating genetic testing into our daily practice. This cancer genetics clinic will serve as a foundation for the eventual development of a comprehensive cancer genetics program, providing genetic counseling, testing, and risk assessment to individuals and families affected by cancer. His research interests are in translational oncology with an emphasis on using cancer genetics for cancer prevention, early diagnosis, targeted treatment and eventually biomarker discovery.



Manar Hamed Ahmed Shaaban Gomaa,  
MBBCh, PhD-MD  
Lecturer, Medical Oncology  
Oncology Center Mansoura University  
Mansoura, Egypt

When Dr. Manar Hamed graduated from medical school, she was drawn to oncology after losing a beloved member of my family to cancer. That personal loss fueled her determination to better understand this disease. She completed her residency at the Oncology Center, Mansoura University, Egypt, followed by her Master's, MD/PhD and MRCPuk degrees.

Over the years, Dr. Hamad has worked in multiple healthcare settings across Egypt, both in the government and private sectors. This has given her firsthand insight into the challenges faced by patients and caregivers throughout the treatment journey. She is a lecturer in medical oncology at the Faculty of Medicine, where she always encourages hope for the future—because we don't know from where the next breakthrough in cancer treatment will come.

Dr. Hamad also had the opportunity to complete an observership at one of the most esteemed cancer centers in the United States. While she observed that more treatment options and advanced care are available there, she realized that the struggle against cancer is universal. There are more similarities than differences in the challenges faced worldwide.

Dr. Hamad is inspired by the statements of her fellow ICRS scholars as they have reinforced her belief in collaboration. She is convinced that our shared fight against cancer can connect us, strengthen us, and bring us closer to a future where this disease is defeated.

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Millicent Spensa Masinde, MBChB, MMed  
Gynecological Oncology  
Kenyatta National Hospital  
Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Millicent Masinde is a Gynaecological Oncologist, Head of the Gynaecological Oncology Unit at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), and an Honorary Lecturer at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. She brings expertise in clinical care, research, training, and policy engagement.

She is passionate about advancing cancer research and global health equity. Dr. Masinde champions inclusive cancer care, patient education, mentorship and capacity building, particularly in low-resource settings. Her work focuses strongly on HPV-associated cancers and preventive gynaecological oncology.

She has served as an investigator in multiple research projects and was awarded an NCI-funded oncology mentorship grant to study the linkage to care for women with large precancerous cervical lesions aiming to enhance seamless integration to care. She reflects, “No woman should die of cervical cancer, screen early, save lives, protect families.”



Mulima Silumesii, MBChB  
Clinical and Radiation Oncology  
Cancer Diseases Hospital  
Lusaka, Zambia

Dr. Mulima Silumesii has a strong interest in research, particularly in gastrointestinal malignancies and HIV-related cancers. She is also passionate about training medical students and residents in clinical oncology, with the goal of strengthening the oncology workforce and improving cancer care in Zambia and across Africa.

Dr. Silumesii’s contributions include participating in the development of institutional chemotherapy protocols and the review of the clinical and radiation oncology training curriculum, all aimed at enhancing quality and standards of care.

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Currently, she is being mentored on her first research project, which focuses on identifying predictive and prognostic factors associated with poor treatment outcomes in diffuse large B-cell lymphoma in Zambia. In addition, Dr. Silumesii serves as a Co-Principal Investigator on an NIH-funded project titled "*Adolescents and Young Adults Living with HIV: Role-based Responsibilities for the Oncology-focused Workforce.*"



Raymond Atwine ( MBChB, MMed Pathology),  
Pathologist/Senior Lecturer of Pathology,  
Mbarara University of Science and  
Technology  
and Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital,  
Uganda

Dr. Raymond Atwine is a dedicated clinician, researcher, and academician with a strong background in anatomic pathology specializing in cancer diagnosis in low-resource settings. He is passionate about advancing early detection and effective management of malignancies, and his work focuses on training, diagnosing, and connecting cancer patients to healthcare services. Recently, Dr. Atwine has developed a keen interest in Gastrointestinal cancer research and he plans to conduct a qualitative study in southwestern Uganda to identify facilitators and barriers of early diagnosis of gastrointestinal cancers in Southwestern Uganda.

Dr. Atwine has led research projects aimed at improving the accuracy of cancer diagnosis and conducting surveillance studies on the cancer registry in southwestern Uganda. Currently, he serve as the director of the newly established Mbarara Cancer Registry for southwestern Uganda. This initiative, managed by Mbarara University of Science and Technology in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Kampala Cancer Registry, documents all cancer cases among residents of the region. The registry's data will help determine the cancer burden and support the Ugandan Ministry of Health in planning cancer control initiatives. Additionally, it will contribute to developing a National Cancer Control Plan and a National Cancer Policy.

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Rita Ukeredi, PharmD, FPCPharm  
Oncology Pharmacist  
Federal Teaching Hospital Owerri  
Owerri, Nigeria

Dr. Rita Ukeredi is an oncology pharmacist at the Federal Teaching Hospital Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, Fellow of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists, and Desk Officer 1 for the Clinical Oncology Pharmacists of Nigeria. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Benin, Benin City.

Her passion for oncology began during her internship at the then Federal Medical Centre, Owerri, where her dedication to optimizing cancer drug therapy and palliative care earned her the Most Dedicated Intern Pharmacist award. As a leader and active member of the Nigerian Cancer Society, she has contributed to reducing the burden of cancer through advocacy, awareness, and institutional support. She has also volunteered extensively in youth-focused campaigns on breast and cervical cancer prevention and mentors young colleagues in oncology practice.

Her research interest is in optimizing treatments and survivorship in breast, prostate, and cervical cancers. A Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Cancer Research and Implementation (SINCCAR)-trained researcher, she is a member of AORTIC, ASCO, and IPOS, committed to advancing cancer care through evidence-based policy and advocacy.



Salma Najem, MD  
Medical Oncology  
National Institute of Oncology  
Rabat, Morocco

Dr. Salma Najem is a board-certified medical oncologist with over four years of experience, currently practicing as a specialist at the National Institute of Oncology in Rabat, Morocco. Her medical journey includes a rigorous four-year residency — including one year of advanced training at the Hôpital Européen Georges Pompidou (AP-HP) in Paris — which shaped both her clinical expertise and vision of medicine as a global, collaborative endeavor.

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Her focus areas include breast, gastrointestinal, and genitourinary cancers, with a strong commitment to translational oncology and evidence-based, patient-centered care. Dr. Najem constantly strives to integrate the latest international guidelines and innovations into clinical practice, ensuring that her patients benefit from the most effective and cutting-edge therapies available.

Beyond the clinic, she is deeply driven by the need to advance research integrity, equity, and innovation in Morocco and across Africa. Dr. Najem believes in building strong, cross-border collaborations, promoting access to high-quality oncology education, and harnessing real-world data to shape locally relevant solutions.

As an eternal seeker of knowledge with an ambitious spirit, Dr. Najem aspires to help shape a new generation of oncology leadership in Morocco and Africa — one that is grounded in excellence, collaboration, and vision.