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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: FWHPWI Dedicates October 6th–10th For HBOC Awareness

Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC) syndrome is a significant concern that affects numerous individuals worldwide.

A vast body of recent and ongoing research confirms that the HBOC syndrome is primarily caused by inherited mutations in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes, which substantially elevate the lifetime risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers.¹

BRCA1 and *BRCA2* genes are tumor suppressors responsible for repairing damaged DNA, and when a mutation occurs, the repair function is impaired, leading to a higher risk of cancer.²

Lifetime risk for breast cancer in women with a *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* mutation versus the general population is well-established through large-scale, international studies, meta-analyses, and comprehensive reviews published by leading cancer research institutions.³

Research underscores the necessity of genetic testing and counselling for individuals with a family history of breast or ovarian cancer while highlighting the critical need for constant awareness about HBOC syndrome, particularly

among high-risk populations.⁴

Research also reveals persistent knowledge gaps, significant disparities in access to genetic testing and counselling, and complex psychosocial barriers impacting at-risk individuals' decisions regarding testing and risk management, which are crucial for early prevention and intervention.⁵ All these indicate that persistent awareness program is necessary, as early detection and preventive measures can significantly improve outcomes for individuals with the *BRCA* genetic mutations.

In light of the above, FWHPWI dedicates October 6th–10th to advocating for enhanced awareness programs on HBOC syndrome. We identify with the efforts of scholars, institutions, and all who promote awareness and education about this inheritable genetic condition. Together, through awareness programs and focused education, we can fight the HBOC syndrome by empowering individuals to take proactive steps towards reducing their risk and improving their overall health outcomes.

Dr. F. N. Alaribe Nnadozie
(MD, FWHPWI)

1. Chakraborty, Z. and Tosato, D.; ACOG; Petrucelli, N., Dady, M.B. and Pal, T. 2. Xu, Z. et al.; Ombadoni, Y. et al. 3. NBC; BCRT; Susan G. Komen 4. Pederson, H.J. and Narod, S.A.; Manahan ER, et al. 5. Guertler D. et al; Campacci, N. et al.; McAlaruen L. et al.

FWHPWI EVENTS

Our August outreach celebrated Women's Month with various activities for women, including games, blood pressure tests, health awareness talks, and counselling.

Below depicts occasions on the 30th August and 6th September (Sisters International Fellowship) with the participation of FWHPWI.



Just a few ways to reduce your risk of gynecological cancers advised by the US National Foundation for Cancer Research

► Have your Pap test by age 21.

The Pap test looks for abnormal cell changes in the cervix to detect cervical cancer in its early stages.

► Protect yourself from Human papilloma virus (HPV)

Talk to your doctor about getting the HPV test and HPV vaccine. Also, limit your sexual partners and, when you do have sex, use a condom.

► Don't smoke.

Smoking increases the risk of different cancers including cervical, ovarian, vaginal and vulvar cancers.

► Make healthy choices.

It's important to maintain a healthy weight, be active and eat a healthy diet consisting of fruit, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains.

► Share your family history with your doctor.

Genetic testing is now available to see if you carry a *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* mutation, which could put you in a high-risk category for ovarian and breast cancer. If you carry a genetic mutation associated to Lynch Syndrome, a heredity condition that increases your risk of colon cancer, ovarian cancer, uterine cancer, etc.

► Contact your doctor if you notice any of these symptoms.

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge
- Pelvic pain or pressure
- Abdominal or back pain
- Bloating
- Changes in bathroom habits (increased urination, constipation, diarrhea)
- Itching or burning of the vulva
- Changes in vulva color or skin (rash, sores, warts, ulcers).

nfc.org/

Session during the
health awareness talk

The harm
versus benefit
argument
around cancer
treatment is
complex and not
easily resolved.

But more
harmful than
any drug is not
getting a
diagnosis, or
one early
enough, to give
more people the
luxury of
choice.

www.wits.ac.za/news/



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RESEARCH NEWS

Update Gynecologic Malignancies 2025

There have been major changes in the understanding of gynecologic malignancies in recent years, leading to new therapy options and subsequently to greater responsibilities for every professional treating those patients.

The most significant therapeutic advances were achieved with checkpoint inhibitors (CPI), especially for endometrial and cervical cancer.

[Read more](#)

Underscoring Genetic Testing's Role in Enhancing Ovarian Cancer Care

There exists a myriad of barriers associated with the adoption of universal genetic testing in gynecologic oncology. More than half of patients may not undergo genetic testing due to time-related logistical concerns, financial toxicities, genetic discrimination, and the implications it may have for family members. [Read more](#)

A pilot study by University of Florida researchers indicates that majority of cancer patients encounter misinformation

The study reveals that ninety-three percent of patients with a new cancer diagnosis have been exposed to at least one type of misinformation regarding cancer treatments.

Most patients encountered the misinformation – defined as unproven or disproven cancer treatments and myths or misconceptions – even when they weren't looking for it. [Read more](#)

A compound from turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), curcumin continues to be extensively studied for its anti-cancer properties.

In a May 2025 review in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*, researchers evaluated the mechanisms and evidence of curcumin and other herbal compounds for breast cancer.

The review discusses clinical trials, including one in which intravenous curcumin combined with paclitaxel improved objective response rate and physical performance in patients with advanced breast cancer. [Read more](#)



Turmeric/major component
'Curcumin'

Image credit: deepai.org/machine-learning-model/

Click here to read
the latest issue of our
Magazine

Ghana builds Africa first genetic database to tackle cancer research gap

Fewer than 3% of the genomes used in global cancer research come from Africa. This glaring gap leaves many treatments less effective for people of African descent. The continent records more than 700,000 cancer deaths each year.* In Accra, a biotech company is working to address this issue by building Africa's first genetic database, drawing on data from thousands of patients across several countries.

[Read more](#)

Cancer 'the new HIV in South Africa'

Cancer cases in South Africa are rising, with projections that numbers could reach 120 000 within the next five years – double what was recorded in 2019, say concerned health experts, who also warn about the increased burden, financial and otherwise, on an already creaking public health sector.

[Read more](#)

Pharmaceutical giant Astra-Zeneca's Cancer Care Africa program aims to expand cancer screening and diagnostic capabilities across sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2025, the program is focusing on breast, lung, and prostate cancers. [Read more](#)

Research presented by the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) in April 2025 highlights findings about the succulent plant, *Cotyledon orbiculata*.



Image credit: deeppai.org/machine-learning-model/

An extract from this South African medicinal plant was shown to induce apoptosis (programmed cell death) in colon and esophageal cancer cells by altering specific genetic transcript. [Read more](#)

Do you know?

A landmark genome-wide association study (GWAS) by Wits University researchers discovered two novel genetic variants linked to breast cancer in black South African women

[Read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the importance of this practice.



Never forget the practice!

It is necessary for your health now and always. Do it often.

The best for you is to keep safe for yourself and for us all.



GLOBAL CARDIO ONCOLOGY SUMMIT GCOS2025

The Cardio-Oncology Society of Southern Africa (COSOSA), in partnership with the International Cardio-Oncology Society (IC-OS), is excited to announce the **Global Cardio-Oncology Summit (GCOS)**, set to take place from **30 October – 1 November 2025** at the **Century City Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.**

[Read more](#)

SGO ANNUAL MEETING ON WOMEN'S CANCER

taking place April 10–13, 2026, in San Juan, Puerto Rico

SOCIETY OF GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY (SGO)

Annual Meeting on Women's Cancer stands as the foremost educational and scientific gathering for professionals dedicated to the treatment and care of individuals with gynecologic cancer.

Since 1969, the SGO has hosted this meeting, bringing together global experts in gynecologic oncology to share the latest scientific advancements, participate in educational programs, and network with peers.

[Read more](#)

ICGS 2025 ANNUAL GLOBAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 5-7

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

The first ever global International Gynecological Cancer Society (IGCS) meeting to be held on the African continent, offers a unique opportunity to engage with leading experts in all disciplines involved in gynecologic oncology from around the world.

[Read more](#)

12th World Congress on CANCER RESEARCH AND THERAPY

Jun 29 - 30, 2026

Rome, Italy

Cancer Congress 2026 is now opening a **call for sessions**, aiming to develop a program that brings together the very best of innovation and progress happening across the full spectrum of cancer control, at national, regional and global levels. This is a unique opportunity for cancer experts to share their knowledge and experience with the global cancer community, gain visibility and contribute to advancing cancer control.

The conference will emphasize the theme **“Novel Discoveries in Cancer Research & Treatment**

[Read more](#)

HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

Physical Activity is vital for cancer survivors

A June 2025 article in Medscape highlights that exercise is a "no brainer" intervention for cancer survivors, emphasizing the need for healthcare systems to invest in support programs to help patients realize the benefits. This research was spurred by evidence showing lifestyle changes, including exercise, can extend the lives of people with colon cancer. [Read more](#)

Major cancer research organizations continue to promote a diet centered on plant foods

The MD Anderson Cancer Center recommends filling two-thirds of your plate with whole grains, vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, and

seeds, with the remaining third consisting of lean or plant-based protein.¹ The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) offers resources promoting this approach and provides recipes consistent with these guidelines.² An article by Mediclinic Southern Africa also highlights the importance of eating a wide variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. The different colors are linked to various antioxidants, and consuming a diverse range maximizes these health benefits. Hence, this sort of "eat the rainbow" concept is an integral part of cancer fighting lifestyle experts advocate.

1. [MD Anderson Cancer Center](#); 2. [AICR](#);
3. [Mediclinic](#)

Financial toxicity and cancer outcomes

A US News & World Report article published this October 2025 highlights a study showing that financial hardship, or "financial toxicity," can be fatal for some cancer patients. The research found that patients whose credit scores fell significantly after a diagnosis had a higher risk of death. [Read more](#)

In review of the scientific literature on the relationship between vegetable and fruit consumption and risk of cancer, results from 206 human epidemiologic studies and 22 animal studies are summarized. The evidence for a protective effect of greater vegetable and fruit consumption is consistent for cancers of the stomach, esophagus, lung, oral cavity and pharynx, endometrium, pancreas, and colon. The types of vegetables or fruit that most often appear to be protective against cancer are raw vegetables, followed by allium vegetables, carrots, green vegetables, cruciferous vegetables, and tomatoes.

<https://www.jandonline.org/>



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Watermelon Salad with Feta & Cucumber

No summer barbeque would be complete without a refreshing side of watermelon, but did you know that watermelon can help prevent cancer?



image credit: deepai.org/machine-learning-model/

National Foundation for Cancer Research, [Read more](#)

INGREDIENTS

3 cups watermelon cubed or balled, 1½ cups sliced cucumber seeds removed, 2 tablespoons mint, thinly slice, 1½ cup feta cheese crumbled 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon lime juice

INSTRUCTIONS

Place the watermelon, cucumber and mint in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil and lime juice. Drizzle the dressing over the melon mixture and toss to coat. Sprinkle with feta and serve. [Read more](#)

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