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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC) Week at FWHPWI

It is a thing of joy that we are gradually coming out from the cocoon caused by COVID-19 pandemic. However, the virus is still very active though the world has been able to find ways to subside its effect on humans. This reinforces our hopes and wishes that day will come when other threatening diseases like Cancer, Diabetes, Ebola, Tuberculosis, etc., will be completely abated one after the other. But while we wait for that day to come, we ought to be watchful and mindful of our health; and create awareness for healthy lifestyle that can help mitigate these dangerous diseases. Such is the motive for awareness week reminding us of Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC).

It is month of October – the month of breast cancer awareness. In FWHPWI, October 1-7 we celebrate HBOC week. Ovarian cancer is the second most common gynaecological cancer in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).¹ The disease is associated with late presentation as there are no specific early symptoms to warn the patients and caregivers, there are no significant screening tests to predict patients who might develop the cancer and no matter how good the immediate outcomes following the current standard modalities of treatment, recurrence is the rule rather than the exception in most cases. It is the most common cause of death due to a gynaecological malignancy with a 5 year-survival rate of 45%.² It is predicted that by the year 2040, ovarian cancer incidence will rise by 47%, with an even larger increase in the number of deaths each year (up nearly 59% mortality rate).³ Likewise, by 2050, the prevalence of breast cancer is projected to double throughout Africa. Available data on the disease in SSA is scant and, where available, are mostly of epidemiological or clinical nature. Its 5 year-survival rate is less than 40% in SSA, compared to 86% in the United States⁵, with SSA reporting majority of the global growth of breast cancer burden.⁴

Seen the alarming result of research and predictions about these diseases, FWHPWI

observed a week of HBOC awareness this month., from October 1 to 7.

HBOC is common in families who have had multiple cases of breast cancer and/or ovarian cancer on the same side of the family. In families with 4 or more cases of breast cancer diagnosed before age 60, the chance of HBOC is about 80%.⁶

2 primary genes linked with most families who have HBOC are: BRCA1 and BRCA2. BRCA stands for BReast Cancer.

A "mutation," or harmful genetic change, in either BRCA1 or BRCA2 gives a woman an increased lifetime risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers. Men with these gene mutations also have an increased risk of breast cancer and prostate cancer.

Mutations in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes can be identified through a blood or saliva test. The usual method of testing, called standard gene sequencing, can find most BRCA mutations. There are other types of mutations called rearrangements, which include deletions or duplications in BRCA1 and BRCA2 that also may cause an increased risk for these cancers. Testing is also available for large rearrangements in BRCA1 and BRCA2.⁶

Although HBOC is rare, there's value in BRCA genetic testing if you are a healthy person with a strong family history of BRCA-related cancers, or if you have been diagnosed with a cancer associated with BRC; for the healthy patient with a positive genetic result, there's a lot that can be done with screening and prevention, starting as young as 25 years old.⁷

1. Akinfolarin AC., Tropical Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 2020.

2. Ragupathy K., Lekoudis E., Emovon E., Springer, 2017.

3. WORLD OVARIAN CANCER COALITION ATLAS 2020.

4. Claudia A. Anyigba, et.al. Experimental Biology and Medicine 2021.

5. Abeer A. Bahnassy, et.al. Frontiers in Oncology, 2020.

6. American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), cancer.net (Retrieved, 28-09-2021).

7. Yale Medicine, yalemedicine.org/ (Retrieved 28-09-21)

Just a few ways to reduce your risk of gynaecological cancers advised by 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).

nfer.org/

A sectional survey showed 45% prevalence of the use of medicinal plants by cancer patients

In recent years, there has been a substantial growth in the usage of medicinal herbs. 80% of the world's population, according to the World Health Organization, uses medicinal herbs to cure themselves. Nadia et al in their study tried to determine the proportion of cancer patients who use medicinal plants, the type of plants and analyse the side effects of these medicinal plants mentioned by users as well as their stated efficacy. [Read more](#)

The Tissue surrounding breast cancer tumours can prevent immune cells from reaching and destroying cancer cells

In recent years, immunotherapy has become an important weapon in the arsenal against breast cancer, but many patients still fail to respond to the treatment. Scientists have now found that the reason so many patients don't respond might not be the tumor itself but the tissue that surrounds it – the extracellular matrix. [Read more](#)

World Cancer Research Fund International (WCRF) Launches the Global Cancer Update Programme

The Continuous Update Project was its flagship research initiative; the Global Cancer Update Programme is a new and updated version of it that incorporates the world's largest database on cancer prevention and survivorship.

Over 12,000 papers on cancer prevention and survival are available in the Global Cancer Update Programme database. Over 140 scientists from 17 different nations have synthesized and evaluated them. Strong evidence is produced by the program's analysis of the results of all the currently conducted research, including the most recent research publications. [Read more](#)

After colorectal cancer, being slightly active may be beneficial

In 2018, 1,800,977 new instances of colorectal cancer, the third most prevalent cancer in the world were identified. One of

the most prevalent and upsetting side effects for cancer survivors is weariness, but new research from Maastricht University, led by Professor Matty Weijenberg found that two years after treatment, colorectal cancer survivors who engaged in light-intensity physical activity reported higher quality of life and less fatigue. Data from the continuing, long-term EnCoRe study, which began following persons with colorectal cancer in 2012, were used in this analysis. The examined data were from 325 patients who had finished their colorectal cancer treatment. [Read more](#)

Former smokers may be able to reduce their risk of dying from all causes by leading a healthy lifestyle

Researchers from NCI, a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have found that former smokers who maintain a healthy lifestyle have a decreased risk of dying from all causes than those who don't. Specific causes of death, such as cancer, heart and lung disorders, were found to have a lower mortality risk. The 52 million former smokers in the United States may benefit significantly from these new findings as lifestyle treatments have not been thoroughly explored in this population. [Read more](#)

In United States, black people's cancer death rates have decreased through time, although they are still higher than those of other racial and ethnic group

Black Americans in the United States experienced a steady drop in cancer death rates between 1999 and 2019. However, a comprehensive epidemiologic study indicated that in 2019, Black individuals still had significantly higher cancer death rates than persons in other racial and ethnic groups. The findings of the study, which was directed by scientists at the National Cancer Institute, a unit of the National Institutes of Health, were published in *JAMA Oncology* on May 19. According to study leader Wayne R. Lawrence, Dr.P.H. of the Metabolic Epidemiology Branch in the NCI's Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, "Even though there has been a decline in cancer mortality nationally among Black people, they continued to bear a higher cancer burden overall than all other racial and ethnic groups studied." [Read more](#)



The cancer burden is expected to nearly double in sub-Saharan Africa during the next 20 years as a result of population growth and ageing, reaching 1.5 million new cases and 1 million deaths by 2040.

To overcome this mounting challenge, each country in sub-Saharan Africa needs to implement a cancer control programme as part of national health planning and to have at its disposal routine surveillance systems capable of monitoring progress in the delivery of specific interventions.

IARC/WHO PRESS
RELEASE
10 May 2022
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pandemic is not over.
Never
forget this practice!



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for your health
now and always.

Do it often.

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

Scientists have found out that Soft Sea Corals are sources of sought-after “Anti-Cancer” compound



Soft sea corals

Image credit: healthcare.utah.edu/publicaffairs/news/2022/05/coral-anti-cancer-drug

A combination of three drugs slows the progression of advanced kidney cancer

According to research lead by an oncologist at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the addition of a targeted kinase inhibitor to a two-drug immunotherapy combination reduced the progression of advanced kidney cancer in patients who had not previously received treatment. According to Toni Choueiri, patients who received the kinase inhibitor cabozantinib along with the checkpoint-blockers nivolumab and ipilimumab had dramatically improved progression-free survival compared to those who received only those medications. [Read more](#)

Uneven cannabis therapy training among cannabis dispensary staff, according to a survey

Research indicates that many cancer patients use cannabis for medical purposes, and oncology teams sometimes provide little guidance about its use, therefore patients frequently resort to the personnel at cannabis dispensaries for counsel. The quality of on-the-job training at dispensaries is noticeably inconsistent, according to a recent study by researchers at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, despite the commitment of many dispensary employees to educate themselves about medical cannabis. 26 employees at cannabis dispensaries in 13 states participated in in-depth interviews for the study, which was then published online by the journal JCO Oncology Practice. Ilana Braun, MD, of Dana-Farber and Brigham and Women's Hospital is the study's first author. "Our study opens the door to debating that we

For 25 years, drug hunters have been searching for the source of a natural chemical that had shown promise in initial studies for treating cancer. Now, researchers at University of Utah report that easy-to-find soft corals – flexible corals that resemble under-water plants – make the elusive compound.

[Read more](#)

as doctors may not be able to entirely delegate responsibility for advising patients to the dispensaries," she adds "We must devise solutions to this problem." [Read more](#)

A new cancer treatment gives patients who have run out of choices hope

In individuals who are resistant to immunotherapy, a novel cancer medication can halt the spread of the disease. When other treatment options, such as surgery, radiotherapy, or chemotherapy have failed, immunotherapy employs the immune system to target and kill cancer cells and can save lives. However, not all patients will benefit from it, and some tumors may develop resistance to it. Recently, physicians in the UK discovered that immunotherapy in combination with the innovative experimental medicine guadecitabine can overcome a cancer's resistance to immunotherapy. Patients that were anticipated to pass away after utilizing all available treatments actually lived significantly longer, they discovered. [Read more](#)

A ground breaking human study connects cookware's "forever chemicals" to liver cancer

Researchers at the University of Southern California have discovered a correlation between increased risk of liver cancer and exposure to chemicals used in long-lasting makeup and non-stick cookware. Based on extensive animal research and a few analyses including people, scientists theorized that man-made "forever chemicals" (also known as PFAS) were hazardous to the liver. [Read more](#)

A study reveals that advanced cancer patients are more likely to experience pain and depression

Researchers have discovered that individuals with advanced cancer have a significant burden of physical and psychological symptoms and discomfort, as well as a risk for depression. The researchers recruited 343 participants for their study, of whom 229 (66.8%) had stage 4 cancer, according to their publication in e-cancer medical science. In patients with a variety of tumors who are undergoing oncology therapy, it is the first study in South Africa to evaluate patient reported symptoms and the risk of depression. [Read more](#)

Treatment for cancer is an expensive battle that many female survivors in Zimbabwe must contend with

In some rural and traditional contexts, cancer frequently gets confused with witchcraft. In Zimbabwe's public hospitals, there are no functional cancer therapy devices. Cancer patients are creating support groups to lessen their suffering while criticizing a lack of political will. Precious Mpofu, 42, cared for her mother while her health declined for almost a year and a half, during which time the family came to the conclusion that she had been bewitched. Following the passing of her mother, there was a witch hunt that posed a threat to split the extended family apart. For Mpofu, the time following therapy is the most difficult phase. You experience anxiousness or a downward spiral of depression. Counselling can help with it. This step of treatment is crucial but very expensive. [Read more](#)

50 per cent global cancer burden in children will be in Africa by 2050

According to research by The Lancet Oncology Commission on the burden of cancer in sub-Saharan Africa, cancer-related deaths cost Nigeria \$5.9 billion in 2019. According to the analysis, Africa will be home to over half of the world's under-15-year-old cancer patients by 2050. The chair of the Lancet Oncology Commission for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Prof. Wilfred Ngwa, presented the report at the 5th scientific

conference of the Association of Clinical and Radiation Oncologists of Nigeria (ARCON) in Abuja and referred to the cancer burden in Nigeria and Africa as a huge emergency. Ngwa warned that if the problem is not resolved, the death toll will keep rising exponentially. [Read more](#)

Leading-edge Radon Research in Cameroon Lowers Lung Cancer Risks

The majority of radiation that humans are exposed to comes from radon, and breathing it in raises your risk of getting lung cancer. Among non-smokers, radon is the main factor in lung cancer development. In the open air, radon quickly reaches very low amounts and is harmless. On the other hand, due to extended exposure, even low levels of indoor radon pose health hazards. In a pioneering pilot study in Africa, scientists at the Institute of Geological and Mining Research in Cameroon studied 3,000 homes nationwide, including those near uranium resources, where radon is frequently found in high concentrations. More than 2% of the examined residences had radon levels over the maximum IAEA-recommended level of 300 Bq/m³, and an astounding 49% had levels above this level. [Read more](#)

HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

Developing good habits as we age will increase our longevity

Aging is a natural process. A person experiences physical, emotional, and cognitive changes as they pass through new age milestones, decades, and life seasons each year. When considering aging, there is a wealth of evidence that a healthy lifestyle can improve one's health and, as a result, their quality of life over the course of their lifetime. Three experts from the University of Alabama at Birmingham weigh in and offer advice on how to make the most of healthy additions and substitutes that can raise one's quality of life. [Read more](#)

Do you know?

A researcher in Tennessee (US) has obtained a US patent on four African medicinal plants. The patent makes sweeping claims for preparations of the plant extracts and against "breast cancer, leukemia, melanoma, and myeloma" and "viral infection, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, tuberculosis, or fungal infections."

The patent covers use of *Millettia ferruginea* alone or with one or more of the other three medicinal plants that are claimed. All of the plants grow in Ethiopia and have medicinal uses there and, in some cases, other countries.

[Read more](#)

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Advertising in our magazine is currently most ideal for businesses situated in Nigeria, South Africa and other parts of sub-Sahara Africa, targeting to impress their clientele and to attract more prospective customers and collaborators.

Watermelon Salad with Feta and Cucumber



Ingredients Include

½ cup sliced cucumber with the seeds removed and 3 cups cubed watermelon
2 teaspoons of thinly cut mint
1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese and two tablespoons of olive oil
1 teaspoon of lime juice

Cooking Directions

In a big bowl, combine the water melon, cucumber and mint, combine the lime juice and olive oil in another bowl. Over the melon mix, drizzle the dressing and toss to combine. Serve after adding Feta.

Source: [Read more](#)

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