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

Director's Message

FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELFARE INITIATIVES (FWHPWI) is a newly formed non-governmental, not for Profit Organization dedicated to organized anti-cancer awareness campaign, research and medical outreach programs. Though the foundation has yet no private, public nor institutional financial support, we endeavour to organize outreach activities aiming at early detection of gynecological cancers and related diseases, particularly among the vulnerable. We endeavour to bridge the barrier of gynecological cancer awareness at all levels, sharing knowledge about the cancers, their symptoms, risk factors and possible prevention measures. We try to reach the general public and the most vulnerable through every possible means of communication – to inform and

help imbibe on good healthy lifestyle. But above all, we promote local research and initiatives that can potentially lead to cost effective anti-cancer pharmaceutical products, using indigenous medicinal plants.

OUR MOTIVATION is the fact that Gynecological Cancers are among the most deadly plague afflicting African women today. Yet, awareness level of these cancers are very low especially in Africa.

There are five gynecological cancers: ovarian, cervical, womb, vaginal and vulva. According to GLOBOCAN, out of 36 globally recognized cancers, the gynecological cancers: cervical, uterine and ovarian are among the ten most common. Only in 2018, there were 1,309,165.00 new cases of gynecological cancers, constituting 7.20% of the global cancer cases. Death toll from the gynecological cancers was 609,377.00 (5.50%). 'Cervical cancer' is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women globally. Most cases of the cervical cancer occur in the developing world. Africa has the highest mortality rates and incidence frequently equating with mortality in the absence of healthcare facilities to deal with the gynecological cancers (Jusman et al., 2014; de Martel et al., 2017)

Global increase in mortality rate due to cervical cancer alone outnumber death from malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS all put together. Yet, the number of new cancer cases have been projected to rise up to 1.28 million by 2030, with 970,000 cancer deaths. Furthermore, since the recognition of 'Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome' (AIDS) in 1981, continuous increased burden of cervical cancer has been identified among Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)-positive women. Oftentimes, the combined burden of cervical cancer and HIV leads to osteoporosis and bone fracture (de Martel et al., 2017).

Fortunately, the introduction of 'Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine', gynecological cancer screening and early diagnosis have provided opportunities to reduce gynecological cancer associated mortality. But despite the huge burden of the methods to any country's economy, the vaccines so far, cannot protect against all HPV types. Moreover, most African regions are very poor and cannot afford neither the vaccines nor complete healthcare system. Africans rather have a therapeutic system, (making use of African traditional medicine and Western medical provisions). This co-existence of traditional complementary medicine provides fertile source for discovery of cost-effective therapeutic means based on phytochemical leads (McGaw & Eloff, 2008).

Aware of the fact that the chemopreventive capacity of indigenous medicinal plant extracts can be evaluated for anti-cancer effects in high mortality cancers such as the gynecological malignancies, FWHPWI inspires organized campaign for research aiming at cost effective anti-cancer pharmaceutical products, using indigenous medicinal plants. We are encouraged by the commoving condition of millions of African women afflicted and threatened to death by these preventable type of cancers, and by our awareness of the fact that fatal incidence of the Gynecologic Cancers could be mitigated if attention is paid on prevention and pharmaceutical research support.

This free Newsletter is part of our women's health promotion and anti-cancer gadgets. Whoever wishes to be continually updated on our fight against Gynaecological cancers, and on women's health information and healthy lifestyle can subscribe for electronic copy via email.

You are invited to our forthcoming meetings and regular outreach programs. Attendance is completely free. You can partake in the discussions, and you can surely come to grab something new for a healthy lifestyle.

Advocacy and Outreach

FWHPWI members convene periodically for advocacy and outreach aiming at gynecological cancer awareness, healthy life style education, inclusive early detection tips and aids. Pioneer members of our foundation come from different levels of the society and different professions. Participants together with our members grace our programs with their professional knowhow. All members endeavour to get our anti-cancer campaign to local communities in the form easily understood by the locals, in local languages and in the way the locals themselves handle discussions on femininity.

Our first outreach took place on the 26th of October 2019 at 85 Steve Biko Road (Adjacent Sunnypark), Pretoria. Pioneer members who attended were Dr Sidonie Tankeo, LSM Martha U Ukatu, Ms Vutomi Hlungwane, Dr Olayinka Adeniyi, Dr Franca Nneka Alaribe Nnadozie, Ms Imelda Tarla, Ms Fezeka Cekiso, Dr Thembi Mlamla and Ms Myiko Marshakpni.



Dr Thembi Mlamla on the 1st outreach/meeting.

In her own turn, LSM Martha U Ukatu blessed the event by a motivational speech, pointing out the potentials of the foundation, and the need to seek collaboration of other institutions that can be good partners/collaborators to the foundation and some membership benefits for who is interested in joining the foundation. Collaboration with Women On The Watch (wow) for free mammogram check was hinted.



LSM Martha Ukatu addressing Group members

On the 30th of November 2019 we held our second meeting at same venue in Pretoria. Among the attendees who were not present on the occasion of the first meeting were Dr Debbie Kupolati, Mrs Ann Okorie, Mrs Zathaba Sithole, Ms Avril Richard and Ms Ntombekhaya Yalezo. Guest speaker of the event,

Ms Yalezo gave a vibrant lecture on “The role of the Church, Sangomas and Modern medicine in the fight against gynecological cancers.” She had great interaction with participants during questions and answers session.

Dr Debbie Kupolati, a member of FWHPWI and a staff of Well-being Africa, performed “Body composition test” for whoever had wished to have herself tested.



2nd Meeting: some participants in the lecture hall.



Our pioneer members convene for the 1st outreach: From left to right, Dr O adeniyi, LSM MU Ukatu, Dr FN Alaribe, Dr T Mlamla, Ms V Hlungwane, Ms M Marshakpni, Dr S Tankeo, Ms I Tarla and Ms F Cekiso.

Members outside South Africa like Dr Daisy Nwaozuzu (from United Kingdom), Mrs Vera Anoka (from United Kingdom) and Mrs Augustina Eboh (from Germany) were able to join the meeting (telematically) via WhatsApp.

Welcome keynote was presented by Dr FN Alaribe, thanking all who were present and everyone who contributed in one way or the other to make the day a reality. Dr Alaribe reminded those present that the motto of the foundation is “Healthy women, Healthy society”, emphasizing FWHPWI’s aims, visions and the importance of women’s health for a good healthy society. Dr Alaribe expressed gratitude for warm response of women to FWHPWI and invited those who are not yet members to register and encourage the foundation’s efforts for a healthy society. She also highlight some FWHPWI’s 2020 projects and the need for sure immediate source of funding for the foundation.

A keynote speech was also presented by Dr Thembi Mlamla on types of Gynecological cancers and HIV/AIDs in the African context. Dr. Mlamla pointed out the increase in prevalence of gynecological cancers. She encouraged FWHPWI to include in the immediate research projects, statistical survey of women diagnosed of different types of gynecological cancer on daily bases, perhaps starting with her medical center.

On the occasion of these meetings a number of upcoming events were highlighted, among which, the Official Inauguration of FWHPWI, proposed to take place in April 2020; FWHPWI First Annual Conference, proposed to take place in October 2020; Research (case study on cervical cancer prevalence in different localities, proposed to start early 2020). Interaction with women survivors from breast and gynecological cancers to take place February. We call on members interested in the case study to come forward.

We will soon communicate the exact date and venue of all the events.

Our next meeting/outreach will take place on Saturday, 25 January, Venue: Zethushof 1101, 620 Park street, Arcadia, Pretoria. Time 9:00 – 12:30.



Ms Ntombekhaya Yalezo delivering a lecture on the 2nd meeting/outreach.



“Individually, we are one drop, Together, we are an ocean”

Research News

Research in mouse models finds that bitter melon may help treat cancer.



Bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*), also known as bitter gourd, is a "relative" of both cucumber and zucchini. The fruit is also a staple of certain Asian cuisines, adding to local dishes' unique flavor through its specific bitterness. Recently, Prof. Ratna Ray — from Saint Louis University in Missouri — and her colleagues made an intriguing find. In experiments using mouse models, bitter melon extract appeared to be effective in preventing cancer tumors from growing and spreading. The researchers report their findings in a study paper that now appears in the journal *Cell Communication and Signaling*.

SOURCE: Medical News Today, January 13 2020, <<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/327463.php#1>>

Medical researchers have discovered a new biomarker in cancer stem cells

In the world of cancer biology, not all biomarkers are created equal. These molecules that alert doctors that an abnormal process may be underway can appear as an array of aberrant proteins, such as

hormones, enzymes or signaling molecules, and vary from patient to patient. Because they are a mixed bag, no one drug exists to attack them. But now, a University of Houston College of Pharmacy associate professor has discovered a new biomarker in cancer stem cells that govern cancer survival and spread, and it's raising hope that drug discovery to kill cancer stem cells could follow suit.

SOURCE: University of Houston. "Discovery: New biomarker for cancer stem cells: Protein linked to tumor survival and spread." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 13 November 2019. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/11/191113153027.htm

A human papillomavirus (HPV) immunization program in British Columbia, Canada, is dramatically reducing rates of cervical pre-cancer in B.C. women, according to a new study.

HPV has been identified as the cause of almost all cervical cancers. In 2008, B.C. implemented a voluntary publicly funded school-based HPV immunization program. Eleven years later, the first groups of women vaccinated through this program have reached adulthood and entered the Cervix Screening Program. By linking records from the provincial Cervix Screening Program with immunization registries, researchers were able to compare outcomes between the women who had received vaccinations to those who had not. The HPV vaccine that is now administered in the school-based program protects against seven types of the virus that cause about 90 per cent of cervical cancers.

SOURCE: University of British Columbia. "HPV immunization program cuts pre-cancer rates by more than half." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 21 October 2019. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191021093955.htm>

Cancer News: Africa

Over one-third of all cervical cancer deaths are in sub-Saharan African countries.

Where you live still determines your chances of surviving cancer. There are striking differences in the mortality rates and in the prevalence of certain cancer types across the world. According to the latest *Cancer Atlas*, this global diversity reflects both the presence of local risk factors for specific cancers and the extent to which effective cancer control measures have been implemented. While cervical cancer remains a rare cause of death among women in Europe and North America, **90% of cervical cancer deaths** globally per year occur in low and middle-income countries, with the highest-burden (over one-third of all cervical cancer deaths) borne by sub-Saharan African countries.

SOURCE: UICC News Feed, 5 November 2019, <https://www.uicc.org/addressing-cancer-burden-africa>

Africa has rapid increase in cancer incidence but little investment in capacity of any sort to deal with the current problem.

While progress in oncology has been remarkable in recent decades, not every cancer patient is benefiting from the advances made in treating their disease. The contrast in diagnosis, treatment and its outcome between high-resource and low-resource countries is dramatic. However, there has been little investment in capacity of any sort to deal with the current cancer problem, never mind the rapid increase in incidence which is underway. This is a critical area for investment and not only of a purely financial nature. It is bad to have cancer and worse to have cancer if you are poor. Radical solutions are urgently needed: the status quo is not an appropriate response to the current situation. SOURCE: *ecancermedicalScience*, 25 July 2019, Boyle Peter, Ngoma Twalib, Sullivan Richard, Brawley Otis, *Cancer in Africa: the way forward*, journal /article/953-cancer-in-africa-the-way-forward/abstract

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Health and lifestyle

Today, as decades and decades of numerous studies suggest that lifestyle is one of the main causes of cancer, it is no longer a new fact that we can help ourselves to reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer by merely maintaining certain forms of healthy lifestyle. Here are some of key healthy lifestyles one can follow against cancers.

Body Weight

Being overweight may create a greater risk of developing breast, uterine/endometrial, cervical or ovarian cancer. The body mass index (BMI) can indicate if a weight is healthy. The BMI is calculated using a person's weight in relation to their height. The American Cancer Society's [BMI chart](#) is an easy way to look this up. A BMI less than 18.5 is underweight, BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is normal, BMI between 25 and 29.9 is overweight and BMI of 30 and above is obese. BMI is a good way to get an idea of health weight ranges to maintain.

Physical Activity

Studies show that moderate and vigorous physical activity are linked with lower breast cancer risk and may protect women against post-menopausal breast cancer. Physical activity may also help reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and diabetes. A good starting point is to do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day—brisk walking or biking. Women over 50 years of age with serious medical problems should check with their doctor before starting any intense physical activity program.

Diet and Nutrition

When planning a healthy diet, health experts suggest following these guidelines:

1. **Avoid food and drinks high in sugar.** Sodas, sports drinks, fruit drinks, cakes, pies and cookies are very high in empty calories and fat and low in important nutrients like vitamins, minerals and fiber.
2. **Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, peas, beans and lentils.** A plant-based diet is made up of foods that come mostly from plants. Plant-foods are more wholesome and richer in fiber, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytonutrients (plant nutrients). Phytonutrients help to protect the cells in the body from damage and

help boost the immune system. These include cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, collard greens, kale, cauliflower and brussels sprouts. Green tea, grapes, berries, citrus fruits, apples, whole grains and nuts are other great sources of phytonutrients.

3. **Limit processed meats and red meats.** Processed meats are generally smoked, cured or salted. Processing of cold cuts, sausage, bacon, ham and hot dogs adds cancer-causing substances like salt or sodium nitrite. Studies have linked eating large amounts of processed meats with an increased risk of colorectal cancer. Health experts recommend that red meats like beef, lamb and pork should be limited to no more than 18 ounces a week. If meat is part of the diet, it is better to eat lean meats, fish, poultry or beans. Cook by baking, broiling, poaching or steaming, instead of frying.
4. **Avoid alcohol.** Women who drink alcohol should limit their intake to no more than one drink per day—no more than two per day for men. One drink of alcohol is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces 80-proof distilled spirits.
5. **Limit the use of salty foods.** Too much salt may increase the risk of stomach cancer as well as high blood pressure. Salt in your diet should be less than 2,400 milligrams per day—or about one teaspoon. Try to cut back on added it while cooking, and avoid salty foods and snacks.
6. **Avoid using supplements for cancer prevention.** Taking large doses of supplements may have serious side effects, especially when taken with other medications. Women should avoid taking soy pills, unless approved by a doctor. In certain cases, a woman may need calcium or vitamin D supplements to prevent osteoporosis (brittle bones), but this should also be prescribed by a doctor.

SOURCE: Foundation for Women's Cancer, 7 August 2019, *Risks and Preventions*, <<https://www.foundationforwomenscancer.org/gynecologic-cancers/risk-prevention/maintaining-health/>>

A Recipe Against Cancer

Juicing (the process of separating the juice from the pulp of fruits, vegetables and plant foods) is a great way to *add* more servings of vegetables and fruits to an already-healthy diet.

If you are having swallowing difficulties and struggling with excess weight loss due to cancer and it's treatment, juicing may be a good option for getting valuable nutrients into your body. You also may want to consider blanderizing your vegetables and fruits to make healthy "smoothies." Talk to a registered dietitian about how to do this in a way that will ensure you meet all of your calorie and protein needs.

SOURCE: Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group, March, 2014, <https://www.oncologynutrition.org/erfc/healthy-nutrition-now/foods/should-i-be-juicing>

Dates to diarize

Here are important dates for FWHPWI programs in 2020

25 January	First Meeting/outreach of the year
14 February	FWHPWI Meeting with survivors of women cancers
28 March	Second Meeting/outreach
April	First Community Fundraising Campaign/Inauguration of FWHPWI
30 May	Third Meeting/Outreach
25 July	Fourth Meeting/Outreach
26 September	Fifth Meeting/Outreach
31 October	FWHPWI First Annual Conference/ Observance of Cancer Month
28 November	Sixth Meeting/Outreach

Some other important dates in 2020

4 February	World Cancer Day
8 May	World Ovarian Cancer Day

Ongoing Projects

Provision for Breast Screening, (Breast-light Devices)

Acknowledgements

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Please do visit the GoGetfunding webpage for our donation campaign in support of FWHPWI's endeavours.



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