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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: A thought for Health Workers, Medical Researchers and Cancer patients amidst the COVID 19 pandemic



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

It was not unforeseeable that there could ever occur a viral outbreak, a bacteria, strange powerful fungi, or any such nature's bizarre with the power to render devastation to human health and subsequent life endeavours. Not minding this fact, just a few months ago, COVID 19 and its incredible devastating effects to humanity was far from our mind. Our thoughts, our actions, our objectives and priorities as humans were channelled elsewhere. Today, it is not a dream but a reality that we are living in a world infected by COVID 19 with yet no remedies and no reverence to nobody. The little or the much we know about this virus prompts us to questions regarding, for instance, our weakness as humans and the strength of our human society. And, the lessons we have learnt from several of the pandemic's ethical issues urge us to reconsider our evaluation of the human society as an entity, and the human person's egoistic essence. However, whatever is our answer or viewpoint resulting from questions on COVID 19 pandemic, perhaps the basic lessons we have already learnt is that all health workers amongst us are really living angels who are there to take the risk of being present with the quarantined, the isolated and the dying patients, (victims of COVID 19). Just to remind us all, health workers are not doing nothing new in this period of COVID 19

pandemic. Their duty has always been to do what they do now. Perhaps COVID 19 has exposed this part of reality largely neglected about this class of workers in our society. COVID 19 has as well exposed how much we need good health care systems and robust medical research endeavours; it has exposed the fact that without foresight and research oriented health system, there could always repeat situations as we are experiencing today.

Our health workers and medical researchers, you are our warriors. This pandemic is one more battle that you will end up winning. And, when this pandemic comes to pass, it will leave behind the clear conception that without health workers and medical research, our life is as fragile as COVID 19 and other innumerable viruses and bacteria can render it.

Our special thought also goes to those who are immune compromised to face the COVID 19 pandemic, for instance, HIV, Tuberculosis and cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy this period. Never be frightened that the pandemic is creating a new situation. Remember, you can count on your medics and your loved ones for support as you have always done. You should only be compliant to advices, measures and recommendations from your medics. Some of such measures, valid also for all persons are that:

- ✚ You should avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of COVID19. These symptoms include high temperature and continuous cough.
- ✚ You should avoid non-essential use of public transport.
- ✚ You should work from home, where possible.
- ✚ You should avoid large gatherings.
- ✚ You should avoid unnecessary gatherings with friends and keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.

The basic idea here is to prevent possible transmission of the virus from one person to another. An immune compromised person should try as

much as possible to prevent being infected by others.

FWHPWI'S EVENTS

On 25 January, 2020, FWHPWI held its 3rd periodic meeting for advocacy and outreach. Venue of the meeting was Zethushof, 620 Park Street, Arcadia, Pretoria. We featured as usual, activities of gynecological cancers awareness, healthy life style education, and inclusive early detection tips and aids. Several pioneer members of the foundation were present.

Topic of our outreach event was Nutrition and Cancer. As usual, participants and foundation members graced the program with their professional knowhow. Our free of charge elementary health checks were performed. Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar Check was done by one of our Guests, Dr Rafiat Anokwuru; and Body Composition Test to all the participants was performed by Dr Debbie Kupolati.

Omogiate, Mrs Magaret Onemu and Dr Ma-
buatsela Maphoru. One of the new members, Mrs Onemu (a cancer survivor) shared her story with us. Mrs Onemu was full of words of encouragement for cancer patients. She also gave some strategies on how one can abide to a healthy life style.



Some FWHPWI members on the 3rd meeting/outreach



Some of FWHPWI members on dialogue section of the event



Dr Debbie Kupolati performing on the event of our 3rd meeting/outreach



Mrs Magaret Onemu giving a talk at the event.

On this occasion of FWHPWI's 3rd meeting, the agenda included sideline projects within our research objective. Review of FWHPWI's proposal for retrospective study on gynecological cancer prevalence in Gauteng was one of such topics on the table. It was disclosed that request for permission has been forwarded by the management of FWHPWI to CEOs of some involved hospitals and response is being awaited. Meanwhile, a renewed call for those interested in the study to come forward was made. Discussions on the project of FWHPWI Annual Conference was another topic. The annual conference is scheduled for October. Among the topics, there was also a review of the project concerning interacting with women survivors from breast and gynecological cancers. We still await response from the necessary protocols for getting in contact with the survivors involved.

In the meantime, FWHPWI's director engages in Voluntary activities with Cancer Association of South Africa, (CANSAs). Below are some recent events.

Dr Kupolati also made a well-articulated speech on nutritional products that can help for a healthy life style. Dr Alaribe made a powerpoint presentation (awareness talk) on "Healthy Eating and Fitness."

Some registered presence include new Members of the foundation: Mrs Ngozi Obioha, Mrs Amara-chi Odetola, Mrs Nokam Blandine, Mrs Abiola

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.



Dr FN Alaribe on the event of Wellness/Pink day



(1 March 2020)
Menlyn Mall, Pretoria



(7 February 2020)
Wellness/Pink day
at Momentum, Pretoria,
**Fundraising for (Breast Care Unit)
Charlottr Maxeke Academic Hospital,
Johannesburg**



(1 March 2020)
Kolonnade Mall, Pretoria,
(Shavathon)

Apart from these events, Dr Alaribe engages in some other voluntary activities.



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

RESEARCH NEWS

New Immune-research shows whether ovarian cancer patients will respond to a certain combination of therapy

It was already known that patients with advanced ovarian cancer can benefit from a combination of drugs for immune checkpoint inhibitors and poly (ADP ribose) polymerase (PARP) inhibitors. What was not known was the criteria to determine which particular patient would benefit from the treatment. Recently, researchers

from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute have carried out studies showing that it is possible to identify patients who would, and who would not benefit from the combination. It is hoped that this discovery will make it possible for investigators testing the combination therapy to direct patients to trials that may have a better chance of helping them.

SOURCE: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, **NEWS RELEASE** 19 March 2020, https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-03/dci-nrs031720.php

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) RECOMMENDATION FOR RATIONAL USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR (COVID-19)

PPE is only one effective measure within a package that comprises administrative, environmental and engineering controls, as described in WHO's Infection prevention and control of epidemic- and pandemic-prone acute respiratory infections in health care. These controls are summarized here.

Administrative controls include ensuring availability of resources for infection prevention and control measures, such as appropriate infrastructure, development of clear infection prevention and control policies, facilitated access to laboratory testing, adequate staff-to-patient ratios and training of staff.

Environmental and engineering controls aim at reducing the spread of pathogens and reducing the contamination of surfaces and inanimate objects. They include providing adequate space to allow social distance of at least 1 m to be maintained between patients and between patients and healthcare workers, ensuring the availability of well-ventilated isolation rooms for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 disease.

SOURCE: World Health Organization, *Interim Guidance, February 2020*, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPE_use-2020.1-eng.pdf

National University of Singapore (NUS) Pharmacy team recently found evidence of anticancer benefits in 5 tropical plants

Singapore is one of the Asian countries with a widespread use of modern medicine and a tradition of using local plants to treat various conditions, including cancer. And, like many Southeast Asian countries, Singapore is experiencing widening urbanization and consequent loss of its botanic wealth and culture. Since there exists no scientific evidence of the medicinal properties of local plants, the NUS Pharmacy team recognized an urgent need to document any health

benefits the plants may provide before the knowledge is lost. In the study, the team prepared extracts of fresh, healthy, and mature leaves from the plants and examined their effects on cells from breast, ovarian, uterine, cervical, leukemia, liver, and colon cancers. Bandicoot Berry, African Leaf, and Simple leaf Chaste-tree had an anticancer effect against all seven types of cancer, according to the researchers. Fool's Curry Leaf and Black Face General also had protective properties against some cancer cells.

SOURCE: David McNamee, *Medical News Today*, 27 May 2019, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325273>

(Images of the tropical plants involved in the above study)



Lea indica
Common name, Bandicoot Berry



Vernonia amygdalina
Known as Bitter Leaf/African Leaf



Vitex-trifolium
Known as simple leaf Chaste tree



Strobilanthes crispus
Commonly called Black Face



Clausena lansium
Known as Fool's Curry Leaf

Cancer News: Africa

Oncology nursing is not yet an established nursing subspecialty in some parts of Africa

Nurses in every country, including those in Africa, form the majority of the healthcare workforce. As a part of the multidisciplinary team, nurses take a leading role in cancer-control programmes locally and country-wide; they are often the first point of contact with their communities in Africa. But unfortunately, oncology nursing

is not yet an established nursing subspecialty in most of Africa; six out of 22 African countries studies, reported having no trained oncology nurses at all. The need for more personnel and quality training programmes are an absolute necessity.

SOURCE: Anastasia Mitema, Lize Maree, Annie Young, (2019) *Cancer treatment in Africa: the importance of the role of nursing* (cancer13 944), <https://ecancer.org/en/journal/article/944-cancer-treatment-in-africa-the-importance-of-the-role-of-nursing>

HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

Risk factors of cancer of the ovary

Ovarian cancer is a type of cancerous growth that begins in the part of the female body, called the ovary. The ovary is the part of the female body that produces eggs (ova) as well as the hormones estrogen, progesterone and testosterone.

Ovarian cancer can be very fatal because it is often difficult to detect, having merely little or no symptoms in the early stages. However, symptoms that could come up in some stage of the cancer include pain or a feeling of pressure in the pelvis or tummy, a feeling of fullness or gradual swelling of the tummy, irregular periods or signs of pregnancy, high temperatures (fevers), chills, feeling or being sick and pain in the abdomen.

Ovarian cancer is of many types like the epithelial tumors, germ cell tumors, stromal tumors, ovarian sarcoma and carcinoma, etc. What causes cancer to start in the ovary is yet unknown. But some of the risk factors that may increase the chances of it developing is known, and these include

1. Age

Some ovarian cancers are rare in people under the age of 30. The risk increases with age. More than half of ovarian cancers occur in women over the age of 65.

2. Hormonal factors

Ovarian cancers are more common in women who have ovulated more times. For example, women who have never given birth, women who give birth for the first time after the age of 35, women who start their periods young, women who have a later menopause. Hence, experts think, the number of times an ovary releases an egg (ovulates) may be linked to ovarian cancer risk. And, factors that reduce ovulation may help lower the risk of ovarian cancer. For example, taking the contraceptive pill, having more pregnancies and breastfeeding.

3. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

Taking HRT after the menopause slightly increases the risk of developing ovarian cancer. About 1% of cases may be linked to taking HRT.

4. Medical conditions

● Breast cancer

Women who have had breast cancer may be more likely to develop ovarian cancer. This may be because these cancers have some risk factors in common.

● Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a condition where the lining of the womb grows outside the womb. Having this condition slightly increases the risk of ovarian cancer.

● Diabetes

Having diabetes may slightly increase the risk of developing ovarian cancer.

5. Lifestyle factors

● Smoking

Smoking cigarettes increases your risk of a less common type of ovarian cancer called mucinous cancer. It does not affect your risk of the most common type of ovarian cancer.

● Weight and height

There is limited evidence that being overweight, obese or taller may increase the risk of ovarian cancer.

6. Family history of cancer

If you have a family history of ovarian cancer, you may have a higher risk of developing it yourself. Your risk may be about 3 times higher if you have 1 close relative with ovarian cancer. If you have 2 or more close relatives with ovarian cancer or certain other types of cancer, your risk may be higher than this.

7. Inherited genetic conditions

All cells in the body contain genes. These genes are the instructions your cells need to work. Genes affect the way your body grows, functions and looks. Sometimes a gene is damaged or develops a fault (mutation). Changes like this can be linked to a higher risk of certain health problems. Genes are passed from parent to child. Half of the genes in your cells are identical to some of your father's genes and half are identical to some of your mother's. This means gene mutations can be passed on from parent to child. A small number of cancers that start in the ovaries, fallopian tubes or peritoneum are linked to a gene mutation. If a family has a gene mutation linked to ovarian cancer, there may be a pattern of cancer in that family. Several people in the family may be affected by ovarian cancer or related cancers, such as breast, bowel or womb cancer. They may also develop these types of cancer at an unusually young age.

SOURCES: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER); *Ovarian Cancer*, (<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ovarian-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20375941>); Macmillian, *Cancer information and support*, Retrieved 25/03/2020, 18:00 hrs <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/ovarian-cancer/causes-and-risk-factors-of-ovarian-cancer>

Visit our Online Community
<http://foundationforwomenshealth.com/>

Vegan diet tips for Cancer Patients

Work with a registered dietician to develop the right meal plan for you. However, a vegetarian diet can be safe for anyone under cancer treatment. When planning a meal consider these vegetables:



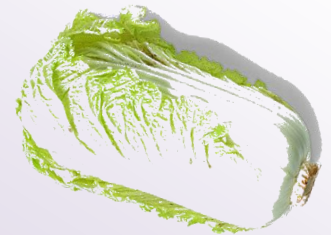
Broccoli



Cauliflower



Brussels sprouts



Cabbage

As a family, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage look nothing alike on the outside, but among cancer researchers, it's what's inside that counts. Each of these veggies are rich in isothiocyanates and indoles, compounds that put the double blow on cancer by inhibiting enzymes that activate carcinogens and stimulating enzymes that deactivate them.

SOURCE: Maureen Callahan, Cancer-Fighting Foods, in *Cooking Light*, Retrieved 27 March 2020, <https://www.cookinglight.com/eating-smart/nutrition-101/cancer-fighting-foods?slide=156859#156859>

Against the COVID 19 pandemic, never forget this 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.

Dates to diarize

Here are important dates for FWHPWI programs in 2020

April	First Community Fundraising Campaign/Inauguration of FWHPWI <i>(Postponed to June, 2020)</i>
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
8 May	World Ovarian Cancer Day

Ongoing Projects

Provision for Breast Screening, (Breast-light Devices)

Retrospective study on gynaecological cancer prevalence

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



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