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The Cervical Cancer Prevention Initiative

News Brief | January 2019

Countries on the move

- **Tanzania's** Ministry of Health launched HPV vaccination into its routine immunization system in April 2018, with technical support from partners including Gavi, JSI, WHO, and UNICEF. Vice President Samia Suluhu and other key figures took part in the national launch in Dar es Salaam. Girls aged between 9 and 14 receiving HPV vaccine with support from Gavi.
- In May, the HPV vaccine was introduced into **Zimbabwe's** routine immunization program. First Lady Auxillia C. Mnangagwa was present at the launch ceremony in Harare. The vaccines, which are being funded by Gavi and the Government of Zimbabwe, will reach over 800,000 girls aged between 10 and 14 years of age. UNICEF, WHO, and other partners are working alongside the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health on implementation.
- In late October, **Senegal** launched its national HPV vaccination program. The First Lady of Senegal was joined by eight other African First Ladies in a high-profile event in Dakar. Senegal plans to vaccinate over 200,000 girls 9 years of age with two doses of quadrivalent HPV vaccine over the next 6 months. One year from now, they plan to launch a catch-up program to vaccinate 1 million girls aged 9 to 14 years. PATH and other partners are providing technical support.
- **Ethiopia** launched its national HPV vaccination program on December 3, 2018, with the Ministry of Health planning to vaccinate more than one million girls 14 years of age. Following the launch ceremony, a press conference was led by HE Dr. Amir Aman, Minister of Health, and HE Dr. Liya Tadesse, State Minister, MOH, as well as Former First Lady Mrs. Roman Tesfaye. The vaccine will be delivered primarily through a school-based program at private and public schools. Out-of-school girls can access the vaccine at any health facility throughout the country.

Africa round table event

A round table event on cervical cancer in Africa on May 19, 2018, featured Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO. Therese Lethu of Global Health Objectives created a report, [Cervical Cancer in Africa, an NCD We Can Overcome](#). Here are some highlights from countries at the round table event:

- In **Rwanda**, "HPV vaccination coverage of 93% is among the best rates in the world...the integration of cervical cancer into existing HIV services has made optimal use of existing resources... 'We saved money, time and human resources,' said Diane Gashumba, Minister of Health. *Partnership is essential for the success of any implementation strategy...* Multiple and permanent campaigns raise awareness of the

benefits of prevention. Supported by a range of local services, these activities are sustained by the Universal Health Coverage...[We] involve women to make sure they 'own' these programmes."

- **Malawi** "is among the most affected countries by cervical cancer in the world, with 2600 new diagnoses per year and 1620 deaths. This is 45 women every day...The national HPV vaccination campaign will start in January 2019. Atupele Muluzi, Minister of Health, stated, 'Our approach is based on partnership, including other ministries, the civil society and the private sector...' To cope with the shortage of qualified personnel, all health care providers are trained to manage cervical cancer control...Emphasis is also placed on awareness and information campaigns under the leadership of First Lady Getrude Maseko."
- In **Namibia**, "under the leadership of Bernard Haufiku, Minister of Health, various activities are taking place. The use of new and proven communication technologies will be supported by the German Cancer Institute team as part of a collaboration agreement. [The minister stated]: *'The goal is to reach out to as many women as possible, including using the HPV self-sampling tests and to build the capacity of community health workers.'*"
- In **Ivory Coast**, the "major challenges are the lack of knowledge of the disease and the accessibility of the health centers... Raymonde Goudou Coffie, Minister of Health, stated, 'We need to bring women to the health centers to detect potential for cervical cancer at an early stage, as 80% of cancers are now detected at a late stage...' HPV vaccination is on the rise. 10,000 schooled and unschooled girls [have been] vaccinated.

Other developments in cervical cancer prevention

International Agency for Research on Cancer releases latest estimates on global burden of cancer

In September the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) released the latest estimates on the global burden of cancer. The GLOBOCAN 2018 database, accessible online as part of the [IARC Global Cancer Observatory](#), provides estimates of incidence and mortality in 185 countries for 36 types of cancer and for all cancer sites combined. Globally, breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women (15.0%), followed by lung cancer (13.8%) and colorectal cancer (9.5%); **cervical cancer** ranks fourth for both incidence (6.6%) and mortality (7.5%).

The estimates in the IARC report are analyzed in [GLOBOCAN's global cancer statistics paper](#). The paper states that with an estimated 570,000 cases and 311,000 deaths in 2018 worldwide. Cervical cancer ranks second in incidence and mortality behind breast cancer in lower human development index (HDI) settings; however, it is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in 28 countries and the leading cause of cancer death in 42 countries, the vast majority of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-Eastern Asia. The highest regional incidence and mortality rates are seen in Africa...In relative terms, the rates are 7 to 10 times lower in North America, Australia/New Zealand, and Western Asia.

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month in the United States, sponsored by the National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC)

This month is a time to raise awareness about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer. During January, NCCC and its local chapters across the country highlight issues related to cervical cancer, HPV disease, and the importance of early detection. The [NCCC website](#) offers resources for getting involved, including fact sheets, podcasts, and posters.

International partner news

- The **Global Initiative Against HPV and Cervical Cancer (GIAHC)** and the American Medical Women's Association is hosting the [Us vs. HPV Online Webinar Series](#) January 22 to 25 and January 28 as part of HPV Prevention Week, January 22 to 28, 2019. Webinar and CME credits are available through Indiana University for the one-hour webinars, which are taking place from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm US Eastern Standard Time. The webinars are also being recorded. They are intended for members of the public, patients, healthcare providers, and anyone else who wishes to learn more about various aspects of HPV-related disease and HPV prevention.
- **GIAHC** also announced a strategic partnership with the Global Film Fund to dub the "Lady Ganga" film in as many languages as possible to promote awareness of the global health concern regarding HPV and cervical cancer. [Lady Ganga: Nilza's Story](#) is a documentary film about Michele Baldwin and her courageous journey down the Ganga River in India to save lives through the increased awareness of HPV and cervical cancer. "We are launching efforts immediately to dub this important film into two Indian languages, Hindi and

Tamil, as India has the highest number of cervical cancer cases in the world,” said family physician/gynecologist and President of GIAHC, Shobha S. Krishnan, MD.

- [World Cancer Day](#) is an initiative of the **Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)** that has been held on February 4 every year since 2000. This day is an opportunity for improving global awareness of cancer and developing practical strategies to reduce its burden. The UICC website has toolkits, posters, infographics, and more for those who want to participate. You can also search for activities and add your own activity to the web page.
- **Rotary's Health Education and Wellness Rotarian Action Group (HEWRAG)** seeks to raise awareness about cervical cancer prevention and opportunities to help communities address this disease. From September 17 to 21, 2018, Rotary supported Prevention International of Cervical Cancer (PINCC) in their first training program at District Hospitals Melchor de Mencos and San Benito in Peten, Guatemala. A team of nine healthcare workers including three gynecologists saw 540 patients over four days. PINCC schedules three visits at intervals of six months and verifies that local health care teams have the skill and capacity to carry on the work. Diagnostic and treatment equipment is left with the local teams, so they can continue screening and treating women.

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