



Project Proposal

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Our Mission

MedPLUS Connect is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The mission of MedPLUS Connect is to connect underserved health systems in developing countries with recovered and donated medical supplies from U.S. hospitals and manufacturers. MedPLUS Connect empowers health personnel in developing countries to select medical supplies that are compatible with local resources and needs, and to fund shipments of these supplies in a sustainable, predictable and reliable manner. The current focus of MedPLUS Connect is northern Ghana, West Africa.

In addition to the organization's primary focus on sending medical supplies and equipment, MedPLUS Connect also partners with other organizations to improve healthcare delivery.

Project Overview

Objective

The objective of this project is to help establish a cervical cancer screening and treatment program in the Upper West Region of Ghana. There is a significant risk of cervical cancer among women in Ghana but cervical care is not currently offered in the Upper West Region. Instead, women in the Upper West must travel up to 700km to receive treatment. We are partnering with Dr. Fofie and Dr. Duodu, both skilled and dedicated obstetricians, to create a cervical cancer program at the Wa Regional Hospital, which is centrally located as the capital of the Upper West Region. This program will screen women for cervical cancer and offer accessible treatment for confirmed cases. The ultimate goal of this program is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with cervical cancer in women throughout the Upper West Region.

Dr. Fofie and Dr. Duodu are eager to begin this program but currently lack the medical supplies and equipment needed to do so. We are fundraising to purchase a cryotherapy kit, diathermy machine, autoclave forceps, and colposcope, as well as speculums and tenaculums. These supplies are all vital to making this screening and treatment program a reality.

Community Need

The decline in cervical cancer incidence and mortality in the developed world is attributable to successful mass cervical screening strategies. In Ghana, cervical cancer morbidity and mortality rates rank near the highest in the world and these rates are steadily increasing. According to the World Health Organization, 5,000 new cervical cancer cases and 3,361 cervical cancer deaths may occur annually in Ghana by 2025. Women between the ages of 15 and 44 are the most at risk for cervical cancer. In Ghana, many of these women are mothers who will leave behind dependent children.

Cervical cancer is the most frequent cancer among women in Ghana and the leading cause of cancer death among women in Ghana. Although there are no statistics specifically for Ghana, it is estimated that about 21.5% of women in the general population of the West African sub region have been infected with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) at a given time, which is a significant risk factor for cervical cancer. Because cervical care is not offered in the Upper West, women from this region must travel between 400 and 700km to receive treatment in the capital of Ghana.

The distance to health care centers offering cervical cancer treatment significantly impacts the morbidity and mortality associated with cancer cases in the Upper West. During the 2011 year, 93% of the 32 cases of cervical cancer diagnosed in the Wa Regional Hospital arrived in advanced stage where very little could be done to effectively treat them. By establishing a cervical cancer screening and treatment program in Wa, we hope to catch these cases before becoming so advanced, and join diagnosis with local treatment options. By providing an accessible treatment center, this program will improve the health of and decrease the mortality of women in the Upper West Region.

Project Description

Cervical cancer can be easily treated when found in early stages. This program was designed with the overall goal to reduce female morbidity and mortality due to cervical cancer by offering comprehensive cervical care in Wa and building the local capacity of health care providers to detect and manage cervical cancer.

The screening program will consist of two different levels and incorporate cervical care into the usual health care delivery of the region. Throughout the five district hospitals in the Upper West Region, select nurses will be trained to use acetic acid to conduct visual inspections to screen for both potential cervical cancer and HPV cases. Suspected cases will then be referred to the treatment center at the Wa Regional Hospital. These cases will be evaluated using colposcopy, pap smears, and biopsies. The confirmed cases of cervical cancer will be treated using a variety of advanced methods including cryotherapy, diathermy, and cold knife conization.

There will be 4 doctors and 12 nurses, in addition to other support staff, to foster the program throughout the region. One nurse coordinator in each of the districts will use targeted outreach in the form of local advertisements on the radio and attending community meetings to inform women about the cervical cancer screenings now being offered. The program will also have partnerships with local churches, NGOs, and working unions to offer screening to their workers. After the program is initiated, advocacy members will also continue efforts in the local communities to provide education on the importance of early screening.

Expected Outcomes and Methods of Measurement/Evaluation

There is very little research on actual cases of cervical cancer specifically among women in Ghana. As part of the screening and treatment program, Dr. Fofie intends to research the incidence and epidemiological factors associated with cervical cancer in the Upper West Region. Additionally, we also intend to measure:

- Number of women screened for cervical cancer and HPV
- Number of cases of either cervical cancer or HPV detected
- Number of women treated for cervical cancer and/or HPV
- Number of advanced stage cervical cancer cases

Dr. Fofie estimates that 70 women will be screened each day across the 5 district sites in the region. He also expects to see between 20 and 40 women at the Wa Regional Hospital for treatment and follow-ups. Once this program is able to get the equipment it needs, they will be able to mobilize local resources for training, monitoring, and supervising the program.

Budget

Supplies	Number of Items Needed	Cost per Item	Total Cost
Diathermy machines	1	\$5,600	\$5,600
Cryotherapy set	1	\$1,500	\$1,500
Colposcope	1	\$3,700	\$3,700
Autoclave	1	\$1,500	\$1,500
Biopsy forceps	2	\$300	\$600
Speculum	25	\$12	\$300
Sponge Forceps	25	\$13	\$325
Tenaculums	10	\$43	\$430
Consumable supplies		\$1,000	\$1,000
Shipping Supplies*		\$5,000	\$5,000
Total:			\$19,995

*The cost to ship the supplies from the United States to Ghana.

Concluding Remarks

The establishment of a cervical cancer screening and treatment program in Wa is critical to the overall health of women in the Upper West Region. The cryotherapy kit, diathermy machine, autoclave, colposcope, forceps, speculums, and tenaculums are the supplies necessary to establishing this program, a program that can make all the difference. Thank you for your time and consideration.