



Cancer Association of Namibia

21/81/096 – Incorporated Association not for Gain & Registered Welfare Organization (WO30)

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Media Communication

HPV testing programme launched in Namibia

START.

The Cancer Association of Namibia (WO30) announces the launch of the first national HPV-screening programme, contributing to the prevention of cervical cancer in Namibia.

The pilot programme in partnership with ROCHE, Maxi Labs and Biodynamics will officially commence on Monday, 9 September 2019. It sees the complimentary screening of an initial 500 ladies for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). In addition to the ROCHE donation, a further 200 test kits were donated by the DKFZ (German Cancer Research Foundation) this week as well.

HPV is the primary cause of cervical cancer and by mobilizing HPV-testing in Namibia, CAN and partners pave the way for preventative molecular testing of cervical cancer. HPV is a sexual transmitted viral infection that the body in most cases can clear itself from (transient disease). With recurring infections, additional infection by HIV, or in cases where the immune system of the woman simply cannot fight the high risk viral strain, HPV may lead to the development of a cancerous lesion in the cervix (mouth of the womb). Molecular diagnostic HPV testing can augment screening for cervical cancer when used in conjunction with the traditional Pap smear, thus allowing for a singular, more comprehensive and thorough investigation.

Women who are HPV+ and HIV+ are at higher risk of developing cervical cancer, and while annual Pap smears help detect cell abnormalities, through DNA-testing, the potential patient can be managed and treated more effectively, prior to cancer even developing in most cases.

“The general timeline from HPV infection to possible cervical cancer is 10 years. Thus, quality testing and management of HPV means that we can effectively save more lives, more cost-effectively, with less hassle and invasive procedures for women - All of this while the strain on our national healthcare system is lifted,” explains CAN’s Chief Executive Officer, Mr Rolf Hansen.

Should a patient remain both HPV and HIV negative, the traditional “Pap smear” falls away and interval screening of 5-10 years is applicable.

Current cervical screening by Pap test or HPV testing cost in excess of N\$1 200 on average. CAN has also negotiated a market access price for the HPV test kits for the Ministry of Health and Social Services, allowing HPV testing to be rolled out nationwide and accessible by all. This access price plan was presented to the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Dr Kalumbi Shangula and the Executive Director of the MoHSS, Mr Ben Nangombe, by CAN and project partners at a function in the capital on Monday evening:

“CAN remains committed to support the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the people of Namibia to fight cancer and its consequences to the best of our abilities. With our available resources and by mobilizing our networks, we aim to develop smart partnerships that shall hopefully lead to equitable cancer care in our country,” said Hansen.

HPV testing shall be rolled out as part of the National Cancer Outreach Programme and the community is invited to follow our CAN-Facebook page for regular updates on venues and dates, when the CAN and MoHSS teams will be in the various regions and/or towns.

Women of age 35+, and especially women who are HIV+ are invited to contact Mrs Martha Angolo of the Cancer Association of Namibia at 061 237740 or health2@can.org.na to gather more information on when our community clinic dates for HPV-testing are.

END.

Yours faithfully,



Rolf Hansen
Chief Executive Officer
Cancer Association of Namibia (WO30)