



*THE MEDICAL WOMEN ASSOCIATION OF TANZANIA  
(MEWATA)  
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**COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY PROJECT FOR SCREENING CERVICAL AND BREAST CANCERS, AND OTHER NCDs (HYPERTENSION AND DIABETES) IN BUKOMBE, GEITA REGION IN TANZANIA.**

**Lead Implementing Partner:** The Medical Women Association of Tanzania (MEWATA) – LAKE ZONE

**CHAPTER**

**Collaborators:** Bukombe District Hospital

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### **Background Introduction**

According to Magaka and Swere (2016) “the accessibility of Tanzania’s health services has been challenged with the inadequate fund, shortage of fully trained health staff in the hospitals, poor communication and transport infrastructure.”

MEWATA Lake Zone in collaboration with Bukombe district council conducted a one-week mass screening to all women around the district and nearby districts in between 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023, with the aim of identifying and treating early sign and symptoms of non-communicable diseases including hypertension, diabetes and reproductive cancers among women in the district.

The Medical Women Association of Tanzania, has been providing free screening checkups to the society with the focus on reproductive health cancers as they have a great burden to the nation. Having its members all over the country makes these screening campaigns possible. Tanzania is observing epidemiological transition whereby non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, cancer, diabetes and mental health are increasingly leading course of death. Regular screening for early detection and treatment is an effective strategy to curb the effect of such diseases.

The health care workers conducted basic health checkups including blood pressure, sugar levels, breast and cervical cancer screening. Several tents were set up for the different checkups and consultation and the doors were opened for anyone to walk in and consult.

### **Rationale.**

In rural areas like Bukombe district, health facilities are few and with some limited number of well-trained healthcare workers to offer quality and consistent screening services. Either, the few available health care facilities are always overpopulated with few healthcare workers to offer the services.

In the other hand, private facilities are few and unaffordable for most of the population. People in the rural areas like Bukombe do not go for checkups because they simply cannot afford the cost of these services in the private facilities, or they do not have the resources to travel to the government hospitals. Others do not have time to queue for hours to get a checkup as they are busy in farm/agricultural works and small business activities to support their families.

### **Scope of the activity**

The activity focused on offering health education on prevention, and common signs and symptoms of non-communicable diseases, health education on nutrition and its impact and contributions to non-communicable diseases prevention, and finally all people attended were screened for hypertension, blood sugar levels, in addition of breast and cervical cancer screening to attended women

### **The Goal**

The goal was to maintain health and wellbeing of people in Bukombe District by promoting health behaviours and encouraging regular medical check-ups and offering treatment of early changes that would develop to breast and cervical cancer in women.

Also, to increase access to healthcare services among people as many were seen by healthcare professionals. The activity also aimed at increasing interaction between community and healthcare workers through health talks and question and answers, hence increased trust.

### **The Output**

- Total of 784 clients were screened, where males were 209 and 575 females
- 48 (35M & 13F) clients were found to have high blood sugar.
- 151 Females & 85 Males were hypertensive.

- Among 281 clients tested for HIV, 18Female and 21Male were found to be positive
- A total of 318 females undergone breast examination and 3 had breast lumps.
- 278 women were screened for cervical cancer and 17 were found to be VIA positive and crayo-therapy was done, 3 had suspected lesions and 39 other infections.

## Challenges.

- Low budget that resulted into small coverage
- Up until the last day of activity people were still showing up for the services
- Inadequate fund to support clients who were found to require referral for further evaluation at Bugando Medical Center.
- Some patients were found to have high blood pressure and sugar and we were not able to assist for their medical expenses

## Recommendations

- MEWATA should solicit fund to conduct a large mass campaign in lake-zone to meet the demand
- Adequate fund will also allow a large number of health professionals with different medical specialities to participate hence people with different health conditions will be attended

